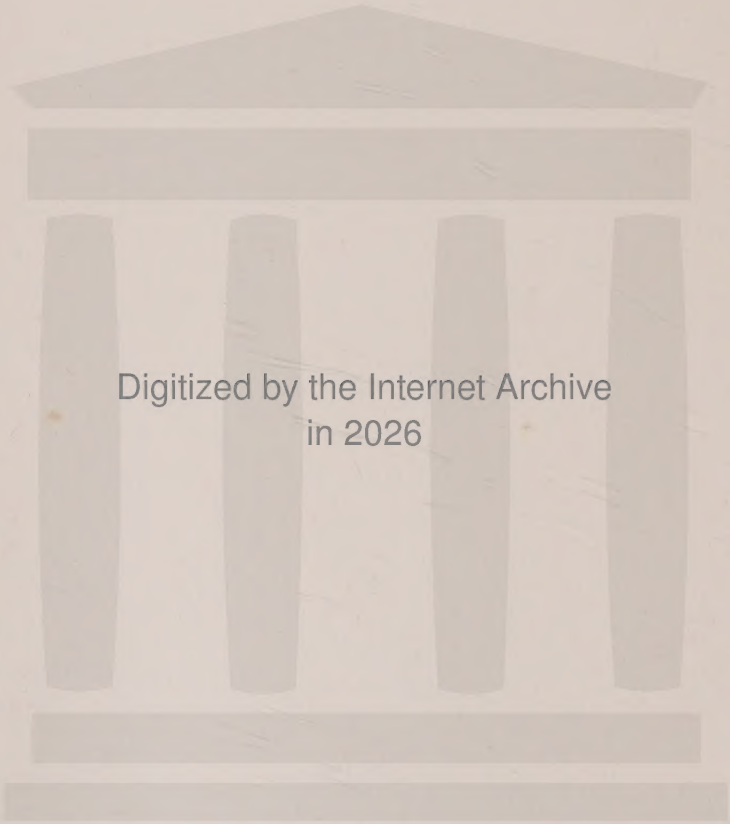
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SECRET MEMOIRS

OF THE

COURT OF BERLIN

UNDER WILLIAM II

VOLUME II

The Kaiser

PRIVATE LIVES

OF

Kaiser William II. and His Consort

Secret History of the Court of Berlin

FROM THE PAPERS AND DIARIES OF
URSULA COUNTESS VON EPPINGHOVEN
DAME DU PALAIS TO HER MAJESTY THE EMPRESS-QUEEN

By HENRY W. FISCHER

VOLUME II

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Secret Memoirs

THE KAISER AND KAISERIN OF GERMANY

VOLUME II

THE KAISER

(Continued)

CONTENTS.

VOLUME TWO.

THE KAISER.

CHAPTER XI.

Bismarck reconciliation.— Frederick, Empress, on William's friends.— Princess Meiningen calls William charlatan. — Von Kiderlen.— Eulenburg, "Phili," letters.— Eulenburg a public charge.— His seven children suffer on account of hospitality offered William.— Gossip of Generals von Hahnke and von Plessen.— William gave statue to Eulenburg.— "Phili," a sycophant.— Radowitz, Von.— Bismarck, Prince, rescript.— Prince Radolin, incompetent.— Von Hahnke, trivial man.— His duties; his nicknames.— Otto, Archduke of Austria, profligate.— Count Hoenbroich's wife not received at court.— Count Visone cheated at Jockey Club.— Von Plessen, lover of a princess.— *Risque Mot* by William's sister — William bounces generals.— Prince Meiningen withdraws from court.— Royal signatures.— Hahnke's relatives and intrigues.— Minister Von Koeller resigns. 243–269

CHAPTER XII.

Neues Palais, allowances small.— William's salary.— Yearly deficit.— Auguste, Empress, has no fixed income.— Courtiers bad customers.— Auguste buys a bed, payment refused.— She demands "luxuries."— Courtiers as letter writers.— Nurse raises row.— Kaisers's bed linen.— Pay of courtiers and servants.— Wages overdue.— Court Marshal borrows from servants.— Auguste furious.— Kaiserin has not enough trunks.— Cheap champagne and sandwiches at court balls.— Prince of Wales evades Berlin.—Liebenau curses visitors.— Pot roast dinner for visiting queen's

attendant.— William fickle about palace decorations.— Princes Meiningen quarrels with Kaiser.— Verschnur's painting adorns William's study.— William enraged over electric light switch.— William a competitor for Wagnerian honors.— *Haushofmeister* leads royal party through private apartment of Admiral von Scholl.— Royal guests shocked.— William's travels.— Royal castles empty barns.— Meeting in 1896 of Romanoffs and Hohenzollerns.— Prussian court's extravagance and penury.— William silences von Wedell. . . 271–307

CHAPTER XIII.

Seiffert, *Fraulein* Caroline, bore child to Kaiser.— Madame von Kotze explains term "spite baby."— Kotze jealous of Countess Hohenau.— Stork's visits to palace.— Austrian nobles keep mistresses at age of 13.— Sister twits William about Viennese child.— Baby deformed like Kaiser.—William pursued by letters from roués.— His great grandmother declared to have been intrigued with Alexander of Russia.— Auguste surrounds herself by *passe* dames.— Czar Nicholas disappointed with beauties at Berlin court.— William calls Fraulein von Gersdorff bow-legged.— Madame von Leipziger pleases William.— Madame von Kotze for ten years object of Kaiserin's jealousy.— A moment in which all are *de trop* to the Kaiser and Madame von Kotze.— Pretty ankles and hands at court.— Schrader, master of ceremonies, killed by von Kotze. 309–328

CHAPTER XIV.

Countess Hohenau, second of William's charmers.— Kaiser convinced a "dash of plebian blood" improves royal race.— Countess Hohenau called *that* woman by Empress.— Rivalry in millinery.—Auguste lords it over rivals at opera.— William's affair with Madame de Panafiel.— William changes sex of his intimates.— Auguste deceived by royal physician.—William's habit of leaving conjugal couch for hasty expeditions.— Auguste refuses to receive Duchess of Aosta.— King

of Italy recalls her.— Madame Herbette receives William's attentions.— William a picture worshiper.— Auguste accuses Herr Fellbach as spy.— Kaiser and snake bracelets.— Countess De Gortz, the only handsome woman anonymous letters have not driven from court. 329–351

CHAPTER XV.

Victoria Louise, princess, birth.— Hunting at Grunewald.— Countess Hohenau rides woman-fashion.— She presses to her lips a twig plucked by William.— "Phili" Eulenburg, as singer, and Huelsen as Court Jester.— Kaiser fondles Countess Fritz's hands at Soirée.— French woman in scare about white lady.—Auguste gets queer letter regarding Countess.—Kaiser receives similar epistle.— Scandalous letters continue to upset court for two years.— Spies fail to get clues.— Sex character of letter-writer changes.— Prince and Princess Meiningen receive missives attacking each other.— They talk of divorce.— Salacious poems to Princess Meiningen.— Kaiser warned of Countess Hohenau. 353–373

CHAPTER XVI.

Bassewitz, Countess, receives letter traducing Major von Falkenhayn and *Frau* von Berger.— German nobles called tattlers.—Kaiser and Kaiserin love small gossip.— Cartoon of herself leads Empress Auguste to drop court.— Chaplain Stoecker.— Frederick Leopold gives affront to Kaiserin.— Kaiser's inquisition causes great families to withdraw from court.— Rumor selects accuser.— Kaiser poses as savior of society.— Kaiser banishes Hohenau to Hannover.— Countess Hohenau's boudoir searched.— William's farewell visit to Countess Fritz.— Kotze found guilty.— William frees Kotze in triumph.— Kotze busy with duels.— Günther, brother of Kaiserin, sent out of country for writing anonymous letters; returns.— Empress blamed for innocent part in letter scandal.— William's alleged affairs with Madame Herbette drives ambassador from Berlin. . . . 375–408

CHAPTER XVII.

William treats ministers as common servants.— Princess Hohenlohe rebukes Kaiser.— He receives state papers while in bath.— Invites himself to dine on half-hour's notice.— Baroness likens William to crazy King Ludwig, of Bavaria.— Insanity in Bavarian rulers traced to Hohenzollern taint.— William before mirror, apes Frederick the Great in portrait.— Hohenlohe prevents William from aiding Spain in war with United States.— William sends gift to Sultan on heels of massacres.— William's military eccentricities likened to those of Paul, Mad Czar of Russia. . . . 409–438

CHAPTER XVIII.

William drives dog cart, Empress *dos-a-dos* with groom.— Nine thousand subjects imprisoned for *lese majeste*.— William pardons nurse girl.—William detests servants. — Maid hides in stove to escape him.— Whipping of servants upheld.— William bars women from parade grounds.— He converts hunting box into Eveless Eden.— Taste in music and drama self-glorifying.— William exalts Wildenbruch.— Kaiser's festival play a failure.— Kaiser collaborates with Captain von Lauff. 439–463

CHAPTER XIX.

Fraulein vön Bocklin, admired by Kaiser, barred by Empress.— Vilma Parlaghy watched by Kaiserin as she paints William's picture.— Biesterfeld enrages William.— William aids Paris fire victims, but refusing to help Württemberg flood victims.— Eulenburg praises Lonsdale as host.— Lonsdale's visit.— Kaiser puts Lonsdale in third rank at state functions.— Joachim, Kaiser's son, a weakling.— William's egotism breaks up a banquet.— Nicholas, then Czarowitch, refuses to leave roué frolic to meet Kaiser.— Czar Nicholas and Kaiser later photographed together.— Kaiser's joke embarrasses Li Hung Chang.— Auguste criticized at

parade.— William reprimands her.— He narrowly escapes drowning.— Prince Henry careless and unlettered.—William prepares Henry's speeches.— Kaiser apparently likes to sign death warrants.— Pardons only duellists.— Professor Mommsen declines title of "Excellency" from a "crazy person." — Kaiser frightened in coach runaway.— William's epilepsy kept secret.— Kaiser worships beautiful hands. 465–503

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME II

The Kaiser *Frontispiece*

Coat-of-Arms of the House of Hohenzollern

Prince von Bulow

The Kaiser and Count von Moltke Studying a Military Map

Frederick the Great

The Royal Palace at Dresden

The Kaiser and His Six Sons

The Kaiser and His Leading Generals

The Kaiser's Yacht Meteor

CHAPTER XI

Toward the end of January, 1894, when the Kaiser was about to complete his reconciliation with Prince Bismarck first entered upon by the historic telegram from Guns, which Emperor Francis Joseph had inspired,[1] he informed the Court at supper one evening that the Duke of Lauenburg, who had been suffering from influenza, was doing well again. "I will send Kiderlen to Friedrichsruhe tomorrow to convey my congratulations, together with the customary bottle of Steinberg Cabinet," he added.

"For God's sake," cried Duke Johann Albrecht of Mecklenburg, one of the guests, "rather send a chasseur than Kiderlen! He ——"

"And what is Your Highness's objection to Kiderlen, pray?" asked the Kaiser, dropping the familiar thou. From his tone and manner it was clear that he did not like this particular friend criticised.

"*My* objection?" resumed Duke Johann. "*I* have nothing against your Councillor of Legation, but during my late visit to the old Chancellor a rumor concerning Your Majesty's intention to make Kiderlen Minister to Hamburg was mentioned, and the Prince being asked if he

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[1] In the fall of 1893, Bismarck was dangerously ill with inflammation of the lungs and ischia, in Kissingen, and on September 20 the Kaiser, by telegram, assured him of his sympathy, at the same time offering him the use of one of his castles for convalescence.

knew the gentleman, said: 'Yes, devilish good company at a stag party. After dinner, when we join the ladies, out with him'" (*herausschmeissen*).

A titter went around the table, but His Majesty's glum face suppressed our incipient hilarity.

"Much obliged for the information," he frowned; "but understand, I will not be dictated to in the selection of either a minister or a messenger." Next morning the Kaiser sent straightway for Kiderlen; but the latter, to whom the conversation had been reported by the House-marshal on duty, and who did not care to be snubbed by Bismarck on the eve of his elevation, excused himself on the plea of sickness, adhering to that story for three days in succession, until the Kaiser, losing patience, sent his adjutant, Count Moltke, instead of the Councillor.

Opinion at Court and among serious men generally fully endorsed Bismarck's drastic characterization of the then chief of the official press, afterward Minister to Hamburg, and still later to Denmark, and there are even many who think it applies to all the rest of His Majesty's intimates, the Eulenburgs, Herr von Huelsen, and the cloud of military chums, his adjutants, etc.

"It is a pity," said the Empress Frederick after Count Waldersee's retirement from Berlin (January, 1891), "that my son will have none but lightweights about him; all men of acumen are pushed aside. Still, I suppose I must not grumble so long as Count Herbert is kept out." Her Majesty, you must know, regards Herbert Bismarck as the man who instilled in the Emperor the liking for persons of his—Herbert's—stamp,—flatterers, shallow and insolent, defamers of womankind, tap-house jesters and buffoons. "Scratch either of the Kiderlen-Eulenburg-Huelsen crew and the pickle-herring will appear," she is wont to say,

and years ago nothing gave her greater satisfaction than the termination of Prince William's friendship with the Austrian Crown Prince, whom she abhorred as any pure woman might abhor a heartless roué.

After a quarrel with William, the Princess of Meiningen once called her big brother "the great charlatan," and his cronies the "little ones whom he continuously outtricks," referring to the fact that the Kaiser refused loans to more than one of his intimates time and again. But while it is true that he is personally very close-fisted, he makes the government pay his debts of gratitude whenever an opportunity offers. So he found Herr von Kiderlen a supernumerary Councillor of Legation, with little to recommend him besides his close knowledge of disparaging personalities respecting colleagues and chiefs, high officials in Berlin, and diplomats in all parts of the world. "If my Chancellor keeps a Holstein,[1] why should I not employ Kiderlen in the same capacity?" said the Emperor one day in conversation with Herr von Helldorff. "He is such a smooth talker, and so easy-going, that no one will suspect his mission." Consequently, Kiderlen was appointed aid to Herbert Bismarck, with the understanding that he report to the imperial master all that happened and all that was spoken in the official and private households of both the Chancellor and Secretary of Foreign Affairs. To be sure, as *inquisiteur de la foi* he was forced to be his own grave-digger, morally and politically, for Count Herbert's successor had no use for him; but the Kaiser quickly found another berth for his favorite, who became forthwith Grand Mogul of the

[1] Privy Councillor von Holstein was for years Prince Bismarck's private *mouchard*, and after the Chancellor's dismissal continued as such in the interest of the Foreign Office.

official press, and as such alternately the scourge of the Kaiser's friends and foes, according to His Majesty's whims. "As the Pooh-Bah of men who missed their vocation," said Bismarck some time ago, "this Suabian chameleon discovered his talent for high politics, and quickly advanced from Minister to a first-rate Free City to that of a fourth-rate kingdom."

Count Philip Eulenburg, whom Princess Charlotte had particularly in mind when speaking of the "out-tricked *little* charlatans," is likewise somewhat of a letter-writer. When the Kaiser tells an amusing story at table concerning some member of the Court or society in Berlin or some other capital, or gives ill report of officials in the diplomatic service, we say as often "the mail-pouch from Vienna has arrived" as "Kiderlen is at it again." In justice to Count Philli's literary skill, it should be added, however, that his most damnatory letters are often least conspicuous for intriguing artifices. When His Excellency has marked down a person as a quarry, he does not go to work with pick and axe, indeed not! Thus, during the year that intervened between Bismarck's Vienna visit and the resignation of Prince Reuss,[1] our Minister in Munich never had anything but words of praise for his "venerable colleague" at the Hofburg; but he was *venerable*, this colleague, and His Grace's "*old* ailment, that kept him in bed in those momentous days, when he ought to have been away from his post to avoid affording Bismarck a chance to visit the German Embassy, might return at any moment."

[1] Caprivi, acting upon the Kaiser's express orders, had instructed Prince Reuss and the other members of the Embassy to avoid coming into contact, privately or officially, with Prince Bismarck, when the latter attended his son's wedding in Vienna; but Prince Reuss, being ill at the time, received Bismarck at his bedside, it being impossible for him to deny himself.

And again: "At this Court" (Munich) "we hear singular reports about Her Royal Highness" (wife of Prince Reuss, *née* Princess of Saxe-Weimar), "who openly asserts that she will not allow her husband to accept orders from Herr von Caprivi respecting people that shall and shall not be received at her hotel."

I have these extracts from a person who saw the originals and who assures me that "all was written in the most amiable spirit."

"His Majesty might show most of these ministerial epistles without compromising Philli's reputation as a good fellow and perfect cavalier," says my tattling courtier. Yet pin-thrusts as they were, the mischief-making reports did their work wondrously well, and Count Eulenburg was gazetted for the most important ambassadorial post within the gift of the Kaiser, in January, 1894.

"Darmstadt—Munich—Vienna!" exclaimed Prince Albrecht, Regent of Brunswick, when Philli's advancement was reported to him; "he must be a second Bismarck, this crony of my grandnephew."

His Royal Highness, always a hearty supporter of the old Chancellor, referred to Bismarck's sudden advancement from Dike Commissioner, in 1846, to Plenipotentiary at the German Federal Council a few years later. "The simile differs only in one respect," remarked Count Schulenburg, Master of the Hounds at the Regent's Court: "Bismarck never received a pfennig of salary until he went to Frankfurt, while Eulenburg has been a public charge since he left school. And the best of it is, his imperial friend makes him a present of from twenty-five to sixty thousand marks every time his stipend is increased."

"You are jesting," laughed Albrecht; "William giving away anything besides compliments to impossible heroes of history?"

"I beg your Royal Highness's pardon, and His Majesty's too," resumed the nobleman. "I was reckoning with the *l'état-c'est-moi* theory, that insinuates itself into all public business nowadays. To be sure, it's the government that paid, or will pay, respectively, these extra allowances,—twenty-five thousand marks for moving from Darmstadt to Munich, sixty thousand for carting the Minister's furniture from the Isar to the Danube."

Though appearances are against him, Count Eulenburg is not a covetous man, only a poor one, kept poor and made poorer year by year by His Majesty's flattering, but expensive, visits. Like the typical Prussian official, he never had money of his own, and, unlike him, he married a dowerless woman, a de Saudelj, of Stockholm, daughter of a Swedish nobleman.

Add to this the expensive habits of Court life, the duty of entertaining the sovereign, and the terrible infliction of having to feed seven hungry youngsters ("so devoted a royalist would never think of having less children, or more, than His Majesty," said Bismarck once), and you get a vague notion of things as they were in the Eulenburg *ménage* before the Vienna windfall. Indeed, as Prussian Minister to Darmstadt, the Count experienced the greatest difficulties in upholding his credit, and the Kaiser's adjutants say that the family, when William had been to dinner or supper, lived off the remnants of the meal for a week or longer. One of these gentlemen assured me that he disliked to accompany His Majesty to Liebenberg and accept hospitality there, because he felt "like robbing a pupillary fund" when dining in a house where so many others, having a better right to the food, went unprovided.

The promotion to the Munich post, together with the excessive allowance for moving, helped Eulenburg momentarily; but until the appointment to Vienna put considerable

funds into his pockets, he never breathed freely. Meanwhile, that is, during the twelve months or longer that the negotiations for Prince Reuss's withdrawal were going on (though sixty-nine years old, Henry VII was not at all eager to retire; and his wife's relatives, notably the Grand Duke of Weimar and Queen Victoria,—the latter was interested in the case on account of Princess Edward of Saxe, the Duke of Richmond's daughter,[1]—did their best to dissuade the Kaiser from his determination),—during this long and weary period of waiting, Eulenburg was in the very throes of financial despair, as everybody at Court knew. The Kaiser alone affected to be ignorant of his friend's trials, and often remarked, at social and other gatherings in the palace: "I like nothing better than spending a few days at Liebenberg; the only trouble is, the place is so terribly old-fashioned," words that were repeated to the Minister by the royal house officials and occasional guests over and over again. Indeed, it seemed to me that His Majesty made it a point to indulge in observations of that nature when and where they might do the most good; namely, when Count Augustus, the grand-master, was present. So frequent and so annoying were these references, that the Prince of Meiningen once said: "He will be driven to the Jew, if you keep on."

"Keep on—what?" retorted tne Emperor, angrily.

"Throwing his poverty up to him as you do to others!"

"Do you see His Excellency anywhere about?" said the Kaiser, sarcastically.

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[1] The marriage of this lady to Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, British General and Commander of the First Life Guards, is not recognized "as legitimate" in Germany; and while Her Highness is a full-fledged Princess in England, she is called by the title and name of *Gräfin* von Dornburg at the Prussian and Weimar courts.

"No," replied the Princess Charlotte,—"for a wonder, there is no Eulenburg present, but the gossips-in-ordinary are," and Her Royal Highness, raising one of her fair shoulders, pointed to Generals von Hahnke and von Plessen, who, though apparently absorbed in the contemplation of some rich stuffs, which the Sultan had presented to Her Majesty, were taking in the conversation of the august personages, as their confused looks, after this sally, plainly showed.

"Mrs. Meiningen," seeing the startled faces, burst out laughing, and slapped her knee as her grandmother, the late Empress Augusta, used to do when she was excited.

When this conversation took place, in January, 1893, during the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh, His Majesty and their Highnesses were not on the best of terms, for reasons that will be explained in another chapter.

Eulenburg, however, did not go to the usurer, but selected the safer, though thorny, road: he borrowed from a relative, his sister-in-law, wife of Count Eulenburg, Major in the Guard Dragoons. This lady, belonging to the well-known Berlin family von Schäfer-Voit, is blessed with a considerable fortune in her own right, and allowed herself to be persuaded to provide not only funds for the building and furnishing of an imperial suite of rooms at Count Philli's seat, but, in addition, lent her genial brother-in-law a snug sum, the interest of which was to be exclusively applied to the entertainment of His Majesty. By this arrangement, the Minister's salary was relieved of the incubus that had sucked it dry for the last four or five years, and his family was at last permitted to reap the undivided benefit of his official industry. And (this was common report at the Neues Palais) on condition that she, the commoner, be invited to meet His Majesty twice per year, madame relinquished all claims for interest.

To this extraordinary display of respectful devotion on the part of the Eulenburg family, His Majesty was not insensible; not only was Count Philli, who never in his life had distinguished himself as a diplomat, promoted beyond the dreams of hardened office-seekerdom, but gratitude led William to unwonted extravagance toward the Court. To improve the outlook from the imperial suite of rooms at Liebenberg, he presented his host with a stone fountain "to be erected in the farm-yard opposite His Majesty's windows," leaving to His Excellency the cost of setting up and finding water. This latter fact the official publication bureau carefully suppressed when the story of the gift was furnished to the papers (His Majesty likes his benefits attended by the sound of drums and the blare of trumpets); but Countess Eulenburg, she of the loose purse, who is good at figuring, told our own Countess Brockdorff that the expense of rearing the ornament exceeded by far the sculptor's and stone-cutters' bills.

But while Eulenburg, like the rest of His Majesty's impecunious but useful friends, never "saw the color of his money," he has, in the course of years, tasted much of the sweetness said to reside in what Pitt called "the power behind the throne." Because he learned to bedizen himself with the Kaiser's weaknesses and small vices, to acquiesce in his (William's) principles; because he has it in his heart to gloss over His Majesty's faults and to affect admiration for all his doings and sayings, one of the chief regalisms was turned over to his tender care,—the making and unmaking of the diplomatic corps. The shifting of Herr von Radowitz from Constantinople to the fourth-rate Madrid ministry; the shelving of Minister to Spain Baron von Stumm and of the Belgrade Ambassador, Count Bray Steinburg; the recall of Herr von Schloezer, Minister to the Vatican; General Schweinitz's

enforced resignation as Ambassador to Russia,—all these "blue letters" bore Eulenburg's ear-marks, all these resignations and *quasi* resignations were planned and discussed at stag dinners, and during the annual Northland trips, between Frenchy anecdotes and Skalde-songs. Three of the officials named had been on the palace index long before their fall. "Your cousin informs me that Stumm was hand and glove with the 'Old Thunderbox'" (*Alte Racketenkiste,—Bismarck*) "in Kissingen," said the Kaiser, on August 9, to the newly-made Minister of the Interior, Count Botho Eulenburg. During His Majesty's absence in England, Count Philli had kept a strict surveillance over members of the foreign service, and the moment His Majesty set foot in the Neues Palais the most fulsome reports of the doings of all persons suspected of Bismarckian sympathies were handed to him. "This fellow" (Stumm), continued His Majesty, "seems to ignore the publication in the *Reichsanzeiger*,[1] and Philli, Kiderlen, and Holstein say there are more of them. Look out for that sort of official in your department; I will have none of them."

The Court was informed of this conversation by the grand-marshal, who repeated it as a warning to everybody, and from that day on we looked for Baron Stumm's decapitation every morning in the papers. We did not have to wait long.

The retirement of Herr von Schloezer was likewise a *fait accompli* for us long before that gentleman learned of his dismissal by an article in the Munich *Allgemeine Zeitung*, a paper then quite frequently used for *ballons d'essai* and other publications by the resident Prussian Minister, Philip Eulenburg. As it turned out, the matter had been arranged between Kaiser and favorite, and His Majesty

[1] Two rescripts, published July 7, 1892, concerning the attitude German and Prussian Ministers should assume toward Prince Bismarck.

authorized the announcement, never suspecting that notifications by the Chancellor's office do not travel so fast as his own thoughts. So Schloezer was taken completely by surprise,—as completely as the press, which regarded him as the foremost of German diplomats; and only the ladies and gentlemen of the Court, long used to see the Ambassador through their master's spectacles as "a slave to Bismarck adulation," as "a secret opponent to the *new course*," and as "the representative of a great power whose *saloperie* was responsible for the riddle: 'Who wears Schloezer's clean shirts?'"—only we privileged mortals were able to say: "I told you so." But, with all this, it did not long remain a secret that the real reason for Schloezer's and Radowitz's fall was the superior mental equipment of these diplomats; Eulenburg thought them fully capable of distinguishing themselves at the first opportunity, and that would not exactly reflect credit upon him, their superior in rank. So the Kaiser was pestered with stories of their unruly ambitions; exaggerated accounts of their little weaknesses were spread, and their known friendship with Bismarck did the rest, while in the case of Herr von Radowitz the Emperor's wish to be represented by persons of great title was used as an additional lever to dislodge the proscribed official. True, his immediate successor, Radolin, was only a Prince of the most recent creation (1888), but what did the Sultan know of such details? So the tried diplomat of the old school was discarded for the goldstick, who gathered his political experience in trotting to the tune of the dinner march and auditing butchers', dressmakers', and other household bills.[1]

[1] Prince Radolin was Emperor Frederick's Court-marshal, and afterward William the Second's lord-carver (*écuyer tranchant*). His elevation in personal rank was due to his marriage to an English lady, the daughter of the Right Honorable Thomas Wakefield.

I say this in regret rather than in criticism of His Grace, I assure you; for, while Radolin is insignificant,—his best friend cannot gainsay that,—he is a charming fellow, amiable, polite, obliging, altogether a worthy exponent of virtues that may be said to apply to the Kaiser's friends and companions in general, with the difference, though, that in one or two cases the adjective "insignificant" should be emphasized, while the others must be qualified as "outwardly."

At Court, General von Hahnke, Chief of the Kaiser's Military Cabinet, easily passes as the most trivial man attached to His Majesty's person, either officially or by bonds of friendship, while to General von Plessen, Chief of the Royal Head-quarters, the palm of graceful complaisance is accorded. But before I undertake to define the positions and rights and duties of these two much-talked-of personages, I want to point out that His Majesty appears to be wofully deficient in judging human nature. While there may be method in the selection of mental nonentities for his suite, his attachment to men of doubtful morals and undoubted lack of penetration in general, is explainable only on the ground of his own superficiality. As I never saw the Kaiser, of whose domestic virtues we hear so much, display any interest in his children, save that of examining their clothes as to fit and quality, so he chooses his friends by outside appearances,—a great name and high position being the sole requisites.

William is the only man of royal blood who parades a liking for the profligate Otto of Austria, the second son of Archduke Karl Ludwig, whom the nations of the dual monarchy, fearful of his possible succession to the throne, include in their daily prayers under the head of "Deliver us from all evil." And Count Hoenbroich, the ex-Jesuit, had no sooner started out to fill the penny Jew press with

denunciations of his former creed, when the Kaiser called him to Court and introduced him to Her Majesty, not as a freak, but as somebody akin to a second Luther. So enthusiastic was the Emperor about his new friend that he even proposed to invite the ex-priest's wife, and only after a scene with Auguste Victoria, in which the Empress—God knows how she gathered the courage to do so !—ventilated his strange *faible* for Jewesses and French women, was this new scandal averted.

And the third on the list of the Kaiser's roué intimates,—the Right Honorable Count Visone, Italian *Chargé-d'affaires* during the absence from Berlin of the late Count Lanza, the Ambassador!

The whole Court was familiar with this gentleman's life: a mere staggering between alcove and bottle! He was known to parade his courtesans even more brazenly than the Duke of Schleswig, and his gambling debts and similar extravagancies were the talk of the town. Yet the Emperor saw in him only "the perfect cavalier," "the *schneidiger* man of the world,"—a favorite expression with His Majesty,—"the distinguished scion of a historic family." And so this associate of demi-reps and gamesters became the petted darling of the Schloss and Neues Palais; his *mots* were quoted admiringly in Her Majesty's boudoir, and his liveries and horses were discussed in the *salons* and antechambers as well, until, finally,—it was, I believe, in March, 1894,—a despatch from Rome put an end to this adulation in exactly the manner that had been prophesied. The Count and royal Minister had absconded after defrauding the governors of the Jockey Club of ten thousand francs in cash and fifteen thousand francs at the tables. This had been the mode of manipulation: his Lordship had been losing heavily, and at the close of the establishment, at 5 A.M., owed fifteen thousand francs, whereupon he produced

a check-book issued by a Berlin firm, and wrote out a draft for twenty-five thousand francs.

"Take what is yours," he said, in his grandiloquent way, "and give me the balance." Two days later the managers of the club learned that Visone had just fifty marks to his credit in Berlin, while inquiries at his home developed the fact that he left for parts unknown on the day the fraud was committed.

Compared with a good many of His Majesty's friends, the members of his official household are paragons of virtue, if not of manliness. There is, first of all, Chief of the Royal Head-quarters and Adjutant-General Herr von Plessen, the picture of a proud nobleman, tall and muscular, with grayish blonde hair and ditto moustache, large, kind blue eyes, and courtly manners, "just such a man as I would select by the dozen for my cabinet, if I were a Catherine of Russia," said one of the Emperor's sisters to me one evening, in a burst of confidence.

"But His Excellency is nearly fifty."

"He was not born so old, and, besides, it would mean that he has a son or sons between the ages of twenty-five or thirty."

Well, Plessen is no Grigori Orloff, hardly an Alexei[1] in respect to influence over the sovereign; a splendid lay-figure, gorgeously accoutred with a wealth of glittering orders and ribbons of many hues, he seems to be more and more degenerating into a solemn complier! "Yet," says the voice of the palace, where everybody sympathizes with the reputed lover of a fair Princess ("Sister Lottchen"),—

[1] Count Orloff was the celebrated paramour of Catherine II; his brother Alexei, who aided in the conspiracy to enthrone her by strangling Czar Peter III with his own hands (he lived till 1808), was soon discarded as a favorite and banished from Court.

"yet, think of the training he got, and how his proud spirit was systematically crushed." There is much in this. After the Kaiser's enthronization, von Plessen was expected to receive the command of a Guard Infantry brigade, but, instead, His Majesty sent him to Karlsruhe, announcing this *quasi* degradation in words that sounded like rank sarcasm.

"You may ask a boon of me," said His Majesty one day after taking dinner at the mess of the First Guards, von Plessen's regiment.

The proposition was so sudden that the Colonel became momentarily disconcerted. While he was stammering something about "undeserved all-highest indulgence," etc., the Kaiser continued: "By my grace you are appointed brigadier in the capital of Baden; you will, therefore, serve under the eyes of my uncle, Grand Duke Frederick, Prussian Colonel-General of Cavalry."

It was an awful blow for the dashing officer and rich courtier, but he had to look pleased, and acknowledge his "most submissive thanks" and all that sort of thing.

When he returned, in 1892, as adjutant-general,[1]—the position he originally coveted,—he was a much changed man. His fine zeal to let others profit by his eminent strategic knowledge had entirely subsided, and when the Kaiser answered his question, whether the technical lessons[2] should be continued, with a vague "You will receive instructions when His Majesty feels like going to school again," he submitted without protest, and never afterward

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[1] The Kaiser's adjutants often hold at the same time commissions in the army.

[2] William's military education was far from finished when he came to the throne, and by Bismarck's advice he continued his studies in strategy and tactics under the exacting General von Wittich's tutelage.

mentioned the matter. Possibly the case of Count Waldersee frightened him, as it did others. Like von Plessen, the Emperor's uncle by marriage is a better military leader than the war-lord, but was incautious enough to let it out; hence his enforced residence in the dirty Altona-Krähwinkel. The new chief of head-quarters had come to the capital to stay, and with that end in view did not hesitate to turn himself into a nought as an officer and as a man.

Alas and alack! how your paradise-conquering Baron Trenck of a decade ago has changed into a meek pot-boiler, royal Princess! Though still a type of splendid manhood, it is scarcely possible to recognize the daring lover of an Emperor's daughter in the von Plessen of to-day, in that smooth-tongued courtier content to see and to be seen, to answer when he is spoken to, and who, to cloak the absolute want of employment his great title covers, does odd jobs that one of the House-marshals, a flunky, or courier might perform as well.

Time and again have I seen the chief of head-quarters come from the Kaiser's cabinet with an air of importance that indicated business of the greatest consequence, while it developed later on that the Kaiser had commissioned him to procure a new novel, or some pamphlet, or look at a horse offered for sale. Indeed, this amiable *sabretasche* is glad to concern himself with his master's most trivial affairs to while away the time that hangs heavily upon his hands, for, strictly speaking, he has nothing whatever to do, save to wait upon His Majesty once every twenty-four hours and receive for his trouble an invitation for lunch or dinner, or an order to hold himself in readiness for a journey, a hunting-trip, or some festival.

That the Kaiser abolished one of the principal duties of the chief of head-quarters, that of keeping the monarch

posted on military matters of a technical nature, has been mentioned; another function, the supervision of the adjutant service, became obsolete by His Majesty's assumption of it; while a third field of legitimate activity, the charge of the petitions for audience on the part of military persons, was closed "as conflicting with the Court-marshal's prerogatives." So there is nothing left for Herr von Plessen to do but to do nothing, as we say at Court, and draw several salaries and many more fees as compensation; namely, the income of a General, that of Chief of Headquarters, and that of an Adjutant-General; and as perquisites: table-money, travelling expenses, servants' and livery moneys (the servants themselves are furnished by the army), and, finally, rations for five horses.

A three-ply salary, augmented by many extras, likewise falls to the lot of Herr von Hahnke, Chief of the Military Cabinet and Adjutant-General, who, besides, holds a canonship in Brandenburg, worth four thousand five hundred marks per year, all because he has amplified the knowledge of cottoning to the tastes of the Kaiser to a fine art. General von Hahnke is regarded as the typical Prussian parade soldier, after the style of "*ces perruques* of the beginning of the century, who shouted *à Paris* in August, 1806, and ran away at Jena a month later," as Count Haeseler, the commander of the army of the West at the manœuvres of 1897, puts it.

With the exception of a year or two, when he held the colonelship of the Fifty-second Infantry, Herr von Hahnke has been an adjutant and caterer to the tastes of superiors from major and colonel upward to royal Princes all his life. Emperor Frederick, who was not insensible to flattery, liked and patronized him; but he became a man of consequence only under the present war-lord, who should go down to history as the employer of biped machines.

We see a great deal of Herr von Hahnke at Court, and a more propitious and obliging gentleman never breathed the air of a palace. His tact is proverbial and his devotion to the Emperor a by-word in upper society, which credits him with selecting for a device on the *Graf's* escutcheon, which William promised him, the words: "The King's will is my highest law."

"The King's will!" That such a thing exists in Prussia has been doubted time and again since Frederick the Third's death; its existence as a continuity for, let us say, twice twelve hours at least, is denied by the Kaiser's own acts almost daily, but we courtiers know better. For my part, I think the observation of how much of a slave William is to his momentary purposes makes those nearest him obey even his most evanescent notions! And where a Plessen silently submits, how much easier must it be for a Hahnke to listen and report, set people against each other, and keep *mum!*

These qualities helped to obtain for an indifferent colonel, such as he was, the gilded shoulder-knots of a brigadier of the Guards, and, glossing over his flagrant exhibitions of tactical ignorance, pushed him into the most influential post at Court, and kept him there year in, year out, *semper Augustus*, as many knowing persons claim.

No wonder Herr von Hahnke is sneered at by those who fear him most,—army men possessing, besides rank and position, strategic knowledge of a superior order. No wonder the battalions of generals, deposed on motion of the Military Cabinet, in late years, named him "Corporal Guillotine." This man, with a contortionist's backbone and the flexibility of neck-muscles of a nodding mandarin,—if the real ones are anything like the China figures,—beats them all, being at once the source and the echo of the war-lord's volition. Under Herr von

Hahnke the Military Cabinet has become the antipode of the War Ministry, the office which a cantankerous Reichstag insists upon holding responsible for the budget, while the Kaiser as tenaciously adheres to the hallucination that moneys once granted should be subject to his pleasure alone. Bronsart von Schellendorf fought that presumption for years, not knowing that all this time the Kaiser was supplied with ammunition against him by one of his friends, the redoubtable Hahnke. Only when the latter attempted to place altogether too many cuckoo eggs into snug position at the many-roomed palace on Leipziger Strasse did the unsuspecting Minister tumble to the fact that there was more than one Holstein-Kiderlen combination in existence.

Herr von Hahnke's chief business is to superintend the clerical work connected with the placing and displacing of the *personnel* of the army, and to report to His Majesty causes and inducements for changing commands that come to his knowledge through bureaucratic or other channels. Think of such a weapon in the hands of one who not only has many irons of his own in the fire, but is serving a master sodden with prejudices, notions of absolutism, and whimsicalities, and who, last but not least, begrudges every minute of time when public business encroaches upon his endless routine of pleasure. It is claimed by one who knows, and whom I will presently introduce, that His Majesty need but hint at the possibility of dispensing with the services of a person on some future occasion to set von Hahnke's cabinet working to make the proscribed one's fall sure, if not imperative, for applicants eager to step into dead men's shoes are always plentiful; and if the Kaiser himself has no one *in petto*, why, one's relatives or friends, or the enemies of some powerful official marked for early retirement, will do excellently well.

"I am willing to bet that a good many heads fell into the basket this morning," said Duke Günther of Schleswig to my mistress one day, toward the end of the fourth week in January, 1891. His Highness was standing at one of the windows of the Pillar Room in the Berlin Schloss, following with his eyes the Kaiser, who had just entered his hunting-gig in the company of General von Hahnke.

"What makes you think so, Günther?" asked the Empress, with an expression of astonishment on her still pale face. Auguste Victoria, you must know, had only recently left the *Wochenbett*[1] to prepare for the Kaiser's birthday festival, then approaching.

"Corporal Guillotine—I beg Your Majesty's pardon, the Sword-bearer of the Lord High Executioner—looks so devilish sly this morning. I reckon the Hahnkes will have golden stars and spurs instead of pigs' knuckles with their sour-crout to-day."

All of us laughed at the Duke's sally, for the chief of cabinet's penurious *ménage* is notorious. "If I were only sure that you could keep a secret," Her Majesty resumed after a while,—and my mistress and her brother began to talk together in subdued voices.

Two days later the "secret" was in everybody's mouth: The Kaiser had offered the command of the Ninth Corps to Count Waldersee when the latter appeared to congratulate him on his birthday. This meant, of course, that the incumbent of the office, General von Leszczynski, was to be shelved. *His* head had fallen into the basket that morning,—not "a good many," as His Highness suspected; but then Leszczynski was worth a good many small-fry generals, to Herr von Hahnke at least, for His

[1] Prince Joachim was born on December 17, 1890, being the first of the imperial children to see the light in the Berlin Schloss.

Excellency is a devoted friend and admirer of the old Chancellor, and therefore a thorn in Count Philli's and Hahnke's side.

Leszczynski's case is instructive also as showing the technical *modus operandi* of the Military Cabinet. As indicated, the commander's dismissal was determined upon on the 24th or 25th of January. The same day, von Hahnke sent a letter to Altona, demanding the General's immediate resignation. On the 27th the Prussian Minister in Hamburg telegraphed that Leszczynski would go without trouble.

His formal resignation was, however, not received until January 31, four days after his office had been tendered to some one else; all of which proves that the "King's will is the highest law," intent upon the summary consummation of its decrees, and disregarding alike the rules of time and the principles of ordinary courtesy.

At a Court concert, soon after New Year, 1893, I witnessed the following conversation between the Duke of Schleswig, at that time a captain in the General Staff, and the Hereditary Prince of Meiningen, then commander of the Czar Alexander Regiment.

"I have it from a comrade in the A-B-C school for field-marshals" (the General Staff office), he said, "that Hahnke's cabinet creates and bounces generals nowadays on mere hearsay. All-highest remarks, which William mutters between his teeth while listening to Hahnke's reports, are jotted down by the latter, and hints to resign, dismissals, and promotions follow in consequence, the documents being presented to our dear brother-in-law for signature usually a quarter or half an hour before His Majesty starts on a hunting-trip or some other expedition; that is, when he is ready to sign almost everything, just to get rid of it."

"I have heard similar stories," said the Hereditary Prince, when Günther paused for breath; "but continue."

"I resume where my comrade left off," drawled the Duke. "Well, then, my authority regards as the worst part of the whole business that in a good many instances the all-highest remarks are not even fully understood, and that Hahnke is *too much of a courtier* to ask His Majesty to repeat a word or two, or to explain the meaning of his monosyllables. Thus many a brave fellow has been undone while a corresponding number of drones were smuggled into fat places. But, of course," added His Highness, observing an ugly look on Prince Bernhard's face, "Hahnke could not do anything to hurt *you*."

"No," growled Meiningen, "not while I am about." Shortly afterward, His Highness severed all connection with the Court, a circumstance which gave the Military Cabinet the desired opportunity to live up to Prince Bernhard's expectations, just recorded. He was forced to resign, and so was Duke Günther, for that matter, while three more Bismarck adherents, generals of acknowledged ability, their Excellencies Herren von Schlichting, von Blume, and von Spitz, kept the pair company. The dismissals, resignations, and removals of less conspicuous men continue unabated, year in, year out.

That His Highness of Schleswig's allusions to royal signatures surreptitiously obtained to make room for drones are well founded is evident from the fact that twice in succession obsolete positions have been revived to afford berths for some of Herr von Hahnke's relatives.

First, there was General von Müller, brigadier of the Guards, who made an ass of himself during the manœuvres of 1893 and was marked for dismissal in consequence, the commander of his corps not only blacklisting His Excellency, but insisting upon his immediate removal. Now, Müller happens to be von Hahnke's cousin, and bets stood ten to one in the palace that the blue letter would sooner

seek the foremost strategist in the service than the unlucky brigadier. As a matter of fact, His Majesty never saw the communication from the corps commander, and, instead of impeaching the General's ability, Hahnke recommended him for the post of "Inspecteur of the *Schuetzen* and *Jaeger* Battalions," a promotion carrying with it a considerable increase of salary. And von Müller being a fine-looking man, a dashing soldier, His Majesty thought he would look well at the head of these crack troops, and glibly signed the appointment. That the post had been singled out for cancellation as more than superfluous, His Majesty had forgotten, and Hahnke, to quote Duke Günther, was "too much of a courtier" to jog the imperial memory.

The same sort of thing happened shortly afterward with respect to the office of commandant of Altona, which latter, by the way, is an open city, and overstocked with military dignitaries, anyhow. Richter and Bebel had made repeated motions for the abolishment of this sinecure, in the Reichstag, and the War Ministry, in compliance with these requests, had struck it from the list of appropriations for 1894, it being agreed that the last incumbent was to resign in the previous fall. So far, so good. But during the Kaiser manœuvres in Rhineland, General von Schleinitz, brother-in-law of Herr von Hahnke, permitted his brigade to be bamboozled, himself falling prisoner, and that while the chief war-lord was but a few miles off, at Treves. Consequently, Schleinitz's disgrace was only a question of a few weeks at the most, and the chief of cabinet had to act promptly and to the point. So His Majesty found an order, appointing Schleinitz commander of Altona, on his desk at Metz, the next important stopping-place; and when he asked von Hahnke what it meant, the latter offered so many reasons for continuing the post in the teeth of parliamentarian opposition, that the war-lord, whose time

was very much occupied on account of the visit of the Prince of Naples, signed the paper without further ado. The ado developed next spring, when the Reichstag looked into the matter and refused to grant the appointee's pay. The debates on this subject were many and pointed, and both Kaiser and Hahnke were severely criticised, until, finally, Bronsart von Schellendorf, by a daring and masterful speech, persuaded Parliament that Herr von Schleinitz must be retained. Needless to say, the Reichstag knew nothing of the relationship existing between Herr von Hahnke and Generals von Schleinitz and von Muller.

Such a service, rendered in the hour of distress, not willingly, it is true, but by the Kaiser's express orders (the negotiations to this end were long, and often on the point of discontinuance, as I was told at the time),—the deliverance from the Reichstag's wrath,—would have placed any other man under lasting obligations; not so the chief of the Military Cabinet, who, to retain his influence and, indeed, his head, must hold himself ready to do his master's bidding without consulting his own likes and dislikes, scruples or sympathies. In the course of the next year, the Kaiser tired of his Minister of War, and Herr von Hahnke was intrusted with the task of procuring His Excellency's resignation, the proposed new military code, advocated by Bronsart, being the point of issue. This matter was to come to a head at the Letzlingen hunt in December, 1895, the then Minister of the Interior, Herr von Koeller, having engaged himself to take the initiative. Accordingly, that gentleman appeared at the hunting-box in a state of great mental distress, as House-marshal von Egloffstein, on duty in Letzlingen, told us. So nervous and so absent-minded was Koeller that His Majesty joked him about it, and suggested he better postpone his début with the tell-tale loving-cup. This, by the way, is an

old-fashioned bumper resting between two immense antlers. It was fashioned after a design of Frederick William IV for the express purpose of playing a joke on old Field-marshal Count Wrangel, a venerable reprobate, who at the age of seventy indulged in such luxuries as paternity cases brought by servants and milliners. Whoever visits Letzlingen for the first time must empty the bumper, which holds about half a bottle of champagne, at one draught, and the supposition is that if any of the contents are spilled the drinker must be a cuckolder, not a cuckold, as the antlers rising over his head indicate. You perceive, our Kings are not conspicuous for the delicacy of their humor. But to return to Herr von Egloffstein's report, which at the time created quite a stir in the household, as in the end Uncle Chlodwig became mixed up in the matter. "The Polizeiminister" (Herr von Koeller's nickname), continued the marshal, "excused his unfestive manner with bothersome official business, and after dinner the Kaiser sent Generals von Hahnke and von Plessen to him to find out what was the matter. These gentlemen returned to His Majesty with the information that Koeller despaired of the success of the anti-military code agitation because Bronsart, with whom he had a personal *rencontre*, was fighting him (Koeller) tooth and nail. After that, all present expected to find the War Minister an official corpse next morning," concluded Herr von Egloffstein, but instead came the great boomerang. Herr von Koeller had no sooner returned to Berlin, when Prince Hohenlohe waited upon him with a properly-drawn-up vote of loss of confidence, signed by all the Ministers, advising him to resign as speedily as possible after the exhibition he had made at Letzlingen.

The Kaiser was furious. "I want to have a talk with you about your interfering old uncle." With these words, he burst into Her Majesty's *salon*, where Countess Brockdorff

and myself were trying to entertain the sovereign lady; and hardly had the door closed behind us when His Majesty's voice rang out with cutting denunciations of the Chancellor, so that the grand-mistress ordered the antechamber cleared. After supper, the Empress told us His Majesty had decided to ignore the crisis, and would set out on another hunting expedition without delay, while Herr von Koeller was to take a furlough. "The differences between Uncle Chlodwig and the Minister of the Interior may be adjusted after all," suggested our mistress. They were not, however, and Koeller's temporary retirement became permanent after a little while.

These tactics having failed, others still more despicable were put into operation. The Military Cabinet, as already mentioned, placed a number of spies in the War office, and removed the Minister's foremost co-workers to other parts of the country. Yet Bronsart would neither resign, nor give up the fight for the code, until, finally, late in 1896, the *camarilla* hit upon an infallible plan for dislodging him, viz.: by persuading the Emperor to order Bronsart to advocate the fortification of several towns on the Russian frontier. Furthermore, His Majesty demanded that certain funds, reserved for other purposes, be used to keep the barracks of the Neues Palais garrisoned all the year round, while the existing appropriations limit the stay of the Lehr und Wehr Battalion to eight months only. As foreseen, Herr von Bronsart refused to accept responsibilities of that kind, and withdrew with flying colors. These were the last words exchanged between the war-lord and the Minister of War, Herr von Bronsart, according to the report of an ear-witness in whom I place the utmost confidence:

"And if I command," roared the Emperor,—"if I command you to advocate those fortifications and cause the retention of the battalion at my palace?"

"Your Majesty's orders will neither make me forget my promises to the Reichstag to oppose frivolous claims, nor will they induce me to misapply funds intrusted to my keeping."

"Ah, ah!" scoffed the Kaiser, who had grown very pale, "the wind is blowing from that quarter: a soldier leaving his King in the lurch! Maybe the Minister of War has more such traitorous suggestions for His Majesty. If that be the case, out with them, Herr!"

Instead of answer, Bronsart bowed stiffly, and, looking the Kaiser squarely in the eye, remarked, with great deliberation: "I have nothing more to communicate to Your Majesty, and trust that sooner or later you will recognize that I did my duty to-day as always. My portfolio," he added, with a side glance at Herr von Hahnke, "is at His Excellency's disposal."

CHAPTER XII

Noon at the Neues Palais.

Forty hungry women and girls, some old, many young and comely, hanging about the back-stairs of what is intended for the most magnificent royal Court of the day! Most of them are munching black bread, scantily spread with lard, while from tin bottles they partake of long draughts of cold chicory masquerading under the name of coffee. One or two proudly exhibit a hunk of salt pork, but many in the crowd depend entirely upon the charity of their colleagues or the good nature of the liveried servants, which latter receive either full board, or eat at the canteen, established in connection with the *Marstall.* And these women, wearing washed-out calico dresses all the year round and a twenty-four by forty-inch shawl barely covering their heads and breasts in winter, are imperial and royal employees, as well as Her Majesty's natty maids and the porters and chasseurs in gold and silver laden dress, the only difference being that the maids and flunkies are engaged by the year, while the women are employed by the month, *i.e.*, during the residence of the Court in Potsdam.

But what about the Biblical crumbs that fall from the rich man's table? There are none. The allowances for the royal board are cut so fine as to just suffice for their Majesties, the *entourage*, and the guests; and when the Kaiser invites extra company at the last moment, the

courses are hurried to cover up the shortening of rations, and frequently some of the visitors are "skipped" as if by accident. Of the royal guests, many leave the flower-strewn table as hungry as the scrub-girls do their nooks and corners after the noon recess.

The women hail from Potsdam or the surrounding villages, and work in the castle from 6 A.M. to 6 or 8 P.M., many walking an hour or more to and from their destination. They are employed in the apartments of the adjutants, of the ladies and gentlemen of the Court, in the servants' quarters, and in the kitchens, at cleaning and scrubbing, wood and water carrying, etc., but our two-hundred-room palace affords neither a place where they may cook a scanty meal nor a room where they can eat and rest.

"They get their wages,—what more do they want?" answer the House-marshals, when we ladies pity the unfortunates, and we have to subside for fear that those we try to befriend may in consequence lose their livelihood—such as it is—under the protecting wing of the imperial eagle.

"They have their wages,"—two marks, fifty cents, per day for twelve or fourteen hours' work, and even in the coldest winter—the Court seldom removes to Berlin before Christmas—cannot get a cup of coffee or a plate of soup from the crowned master, though it is self-evident that none of the women have time to go home for dinner during recess.

A person of my rank runs against this class of servants on rare occasions only; but accident leads me into the lower regions of the palace once in a while, and it gives me a shock every time to see these Pariahs of our splendid Court fighting hunger and cold with food devoid of warmth, behind doors and staircases where the wind whistles the

international anthem of poverty. After witnessing their distress and hearing their complaints once, I never went into the *souterrain* without issuing an order on the canteen for so and so many pea or lentil soups. The gratitude of these women is heart-rending; but those in authority, I found, would rather listen to their friends' whisperings: "increase our fortune," than to the cry from below: "solace our misery," as Maria Leczinski said. Such excuses as: "There is no money for that," "Speak to my colleague of this or that branch in the service,—my cash-drawer is empty," or, "If I signed a voucher for a semi-charitable object, the Minister" (of the royal house) "would impeach my administration at once," are heard in the palace on all sides. Even when, the women having made me their advocate, I asked that they be paid weekly, as the law provides, instead of three days after the first of the month as customary, this "boon" was denied on the plea that it would upset a practice of long standing.

And this happens in Prussia, where every man, woman, and child contributes on an average twenty cents per year toward the civil list,[1] a fact of which we were unexpectedly reminded by a group of workmen engaged in the Berlin Schloss in the winter of 1895, when, as told in a previous chapter, the great Court festivities had been suddenly called off. The Kaiser gave orders, at the time, to send the provisions from the cold buffets to the hospitals; but just then the House-marshal found it inconvenient to feed the small army of workmen engaged in the castle, and so directed that the delicacies be turned over to them in place of the

[1] Englishmen contribute seven and a half cents, Russians four and a quarter cents, and Austrians eight and a quarter cents. Frenchmen pay a little over one-half cent, Americans one-third of a pfennig (four pfennigs make one cent), toward the salary of their Presidents.

regulation dinner of meat, vegetables, and potatoes. When the horny-handed sons of toil first made the acquaintance of anchovy paste, salmon, caviare, potted turkey, imported cheeses and the like, they were overjoyed; but the aristocratic menu palled on them after a few days, and while vociferating for the homely potato, they roundly abused the luxuries "for which they paid exorbitant taxes." The stewards, who gave out the food, were scoffed at and insulted as "dudes," and when Herr von Lyncker tried to remonstrate with the men, they threatened to send one of their dinners into the Socialist camp of the Reichstag. So the House-marshal had to dive into his pocket and reinstate the old bill of fare, while the hospitals received the *beaux restes* of the demolished buffets.

Scenes and incidents of this description, far from being exceptional, are of such frequent occurrence at the Court of the German Emperor, that the ladies and gentlemen of the service have long ceased to notice them.

"But how is it possible?" asks the reader whose "Statesman's Year-Book" tells him that the Emperor has an income of nearly sixteen millions of marks, or about four million dollars per year, and who remembers, perchance, William's boastful speech in which he said he was the biggest land-owner in the Empire.

Whether the latter assertion is true I cannot say, but the sixteen millions are a chiming reality and unencumbered, save for the obligation to pay five appanages of fifteen thousand dollars each per annum to Prussian Princes. That leaves William about three million nine hundred thousand dollars a year to "bless himself with," besides his private income of one hundred and fifty thousand marks (thirty-seven thousand five hundred dollars) per month.

These thirty-seven thousand five hundred dollars form the nucleus of His Majesty's privy purse, and are always

spoken for three months in advance for his uniform and toilet accounts, his private journeys, and amusements. The civil list discharges the cost of representation, the needs of Her Majesty and the children, all the expenses of the household, and provides funds for the maintenance of the royal theatres, palaces, and gardens. Out of a much smaller official income, William I saved an immense fortune, though he kept up a separate Court for his Queen for thirty years, and, for a Prussian, was exceedingly liberal toward ladies that engaged his fancy. The present Kaiser winds up year after year with a tremendous deficit, and his Court, outwardly splendid and richly endowed, is more penurious than that of the meanest Prince of the Empire. Indeed, my maid assures me that at Bückeburg, where the monarch receives only as many marks as the President of the United States gets dollars per year, the grooms are better fed and lodged than the under-stewards in Potsdam. The reason for this is obvious enough: the Kaiser has no conception whatever of the value of money, and orders for himself anything that pleases him, what he sees and reads about, without paying the least heed to the pecuniary consequences. If he desires an article, it must be procured, whether there be money in the drawer or not, and in the quickest possible manner too. With the Empress things are much the same, though Her Majesty will sometimes listen to reason when the Court or House marshals plead poverty on account of imperial raids on their treasuries. The entire civil list is kept at the disposal of these two august personages, and all the members of the royal household, as well as purveyors, servants, laborers, and, as we have seen, scrub-women, suffer in consequence,—a state of affairs that leads to constant friction among the Court officials, enforces a most niggardly and disgraceful general regimen, and

discredits the Kaiser's name with merchants and everybody else having business with the Court.

I had noticed for some time that a certain dealer in flowers, a *Hoflieferant* of *Unter den Linden,* served me with excessive zeal, though my purchases were not extensive by any means. My carriage no sooner stopped at his door, when this man rushed out bowing and scraping, and adding to my titles some I never dare hope to acquire. I also observed that he charged me less than the prices marked. So one day I asked him the reason. "Your Ladyship belongs to the Court."

"But," I said, "others do, and I have seen the carriage of my colleague, Madame the Countess von B——, halt a considerable time in front of your store before one of the employees came to ask her pleasure."

"*Gnädige Gräfin,*" said the florist, "if I may say so, you belong to the Court and *pay cash.* For that reason I would rather sell you a three-mark bouquet than a fifty-mark flower-piece to the lady you mention or" (and he lowered his voice) "to even the Emperor or Empress. I am a well-to-do man, thank the Lord; but when it comes to waiting a year and a half before one's bills are paid by the royal treasury, I feel like cursing my appointment. And the worst of it is, the all-highest example is followed by almost everybody connected with the Court."

But nothing illustrates the unsettled state of the royal finances more thoroughly than the fact that Her Majesty has no certain income of her own. Her Court-marshal is obliged to fight for every Thaler required beyond the ordinary pay of servants and help, with the Kaiser's Court and House marshals, who often refuse to grant necessary funds until Her Majesty's express commands compel them to honor the disputed bills. A rather amusing incident of that sort happened a few months after the enthronization,

when my mistress ordered me to buy a little bed, together with the necessary clothes, for Prince Oscar (born July 27 that year). It was my good fortune to find at Mosse Brothers, Jaeger Strasse, the exact article Her Majesty wanted, and when the bed was sent up she was greatly pleased. "We will keep it right here," she said, "and, that there may be no misunderstanding, bring the bill to Herr von Lyncker and order it paid immediately."

"And since when are ladies of the Court authorized to make purchases without previous estimate by this office?" asked the Baron, after listening to my request.

"I don't know," I answered, sharply, "and, besides, I have not come here to answer riddles."

"Then," said the House-marshal, icily, "accept my compliments, together with the information that this bill is irregular, extravagant, and unnecessary; hence it will not be paid. The baby can sleep in his cradle six months longer, and by that time we shall be able to buy him a bed in the regular way."

"Then it is your pleasure that the little Prince be taken out of the new bed and put back into the cradle?"

"It will do him no harm, and give me much satisfaction."

Of course, I reported the case to Her Majesty word for word, and such a hubbub as ensued you would deem impossible in the highest walks of life. At first, Her Majesty intended to personally give Herr von Lyncker a piece of her mind, but that plan was discarded as doing too much honor to the official; then the grand-mistress, Countess Brockdorff, was ordered to write him a letter, demanding payment of the bill, and upon his reiterated refusal the information was sprung upon him that he had been making war upon the Empress herself, instead of her ladies, as he thought. Of course, that altered the case. Baron

Lyncker's drawer was all at once alive with crisp blue bills, and there was no higher pleasure for him in the wide, wide world than to discharge obligations for the "all-highest children." As to his remarks that the cradle was good enough for the baby, they were mere pleasantries, and he was "amazed that Her Ladyship should have taken them for anything else," etc. But the above is really a very extravagant example of the difficulties of our household exchequer. We have experienced even more fuss about such items as ink or sealing-wax for Her Majesty's writing-table and paper for the linen-presses.

At the one memorable visit Her Majesty paid to her linen-presses (she has been heralded as an exemplary housewife ever since) the Kaiserin observed that the linen was deposited on the bare shelves, and asked Fräulein Kubou what it meant.

"May it please Your Majesty," courtesied the keeper, who was probably eager to get even with her superior, "I have repeatedly asked for paper, but Count Pückler says he has no funds for such luxuries."

"Luxuries," repeated the Kaiserin, "luxuries where my body-linen lies!" and turning to Madame von Larisch, Superintendent of the Royal Household, she said: "See to it that paper of the very best quality is purchased this very hour, and if the House-marshal interferes, advise me."

Armed with this all-highest authority, Baroness von Larisch bought several marks' worth of blue paper, and sent them to Fräulein Kubou, but the servant returned with the astonishing information that the woman dared not accept the material, as the stamp of the chief Court-marshal's office was lacking. "Nonsense," said the dame of the household to the servant; "tell the keeper I command her to place the paper in the presses at once and have no more words about it." Five minutes later, Fräulein

Kubou came in person. "Madame," she cried, "I am the sole support of a family; do not ruin me! If the grand-master learns that I am concerned in this business of running up bills for which there is no appropriation, I shall be discharged on the spot."

The Baroness is a tenacious woman. "Come with me," she said, "and I will put the paper in myself. At the same time you shall send a report in writing to the House-marshal setting forth what I have done, and I will acknowledge that I acted despite your protest."

The letter went, and a veritable *Rattenkönig*[1] of correspondence ensued.

His Excellency, the Grand-master, to Her Ladyship, the Dame of the Royal Household: "I have the honor to inform you that you overstepped your authority, and that you will be held responsible with your salary for the unauthorized expenses incurred."

Her Ladyship to the Grand-master: "Nothing of the sort. I acted upon Her Majesty's express orders, as you may learn by inquiries of my august mistress."

The Grand-master to the House-marshal: "You must pay this paper bill—two marks, fifty pfennigs—which Her Majesty has ordered."

The House-marshal to the Keeper of the Linen: "This paper bill must be paid out of the appropriation for your department as soon as there is a surplus."

The Keeper of the Linen to the House-marshal: "Sorry I have not got a pfennig. The use of clean linen has again

[1] This is an untranslatable term. Literally, it means "king of rats," which name applies to a flock of rodents grown together by the tails; they are sometimes found in the sewers of German cities. A Rattenkönig, when discovered, tries to get away in all directions. The simile, therefore, means something many-sided and heterogeneous, starting from a common source.

increased, His Majesty having been pleased to sleep in his own room several times of late, which means twelve extra sheets, according to the last accounting."

The House-marshal to Baron von Mirbach, Chief Court-marshal of Her Majesty: "Will you oblige this office by paying the enclosed bill, which Her Majesty herself audited? We have no appropriations for such extras."

Baron von Mirbach to Baron von Lyncker (privately): "You ask me to create a dangerous precedent, *mon cher*. I answer: 'No, thanks! Not in the *la main*.'" [1]

The House-marshal to Privy-Councillor Miessner, Keeper of the Privy Purse (*Schatulle*): "There are no appropriations out of which the enclosed bill can be paid, and no surplus funds in any of the departments. You will therefore report the case to His Majesty, and get his all-highest authorization for payment. As the enclosures show, Her Majesty herself graciously ordered the purchase of the material."

Eight sheets of foolscap paper, emblazoned with crests and garnished with stamps and the most illegible signatures, and crammed with officious language in lapidary style,—all about sixty-two cents and a half! Of course, there would have been just as much fuss if the object had been the fraction of a cent.

That the contents of the linen-presses are entirely unequal to the demands has already been mentioned. So it happened that, in the winter of 1893, Frau Heiner, then in charge of the Princes, sent to Fräulein Kubou for six small spreads, explaining that the children were now too old to take afternoon naps, and that she wanted spreads to cover their beds in day-time "so that they look decent when anybody comes to inspect the nursery." Fräulein Kubou

[1] French *mot, en vogue* in Berlin.

looked over her list once, twice, three times; she had spreads for their Majesties, for the imperial and royal guests' chambers, spreads for the retinue and spreads for ordinary guests, but none for Royal Highnesses. "Old Heiner" was so informed. "All right," thought the head nurse; "if there are none, it is about time we had some," and she despatched a girl to Berlin with orders to request the royal purveyor, Metzner, in Mohren Strasse, to send a consignment of such goods to the palace. Selecting a medium-priced pattern, the old woman ordered a dozen, one-half of which were placed in use, while the rest was sent to the linen department. Then the comedy called forth by the paper purchase was re-inaugurated. The spreads came back to Frau Heiner with lightning promptitude, and the old woman was almost willing to keep them, when Her Majesty's Kammerdiener told her that in that case the nursery would have to pay for the laundrying.

Now "Old Heiner" resembles in many respects the wet-nurse of the baby afterward known as George III, who, when a Court-marshal forbade her taking the child to bed with her, placed little George in his arms with the words: "Perhaps Your Worship would like to suckle the boy yourself."

"Nay, nay," cried Heiner, "my money is for feeding the youngsters; I have none to help out the Court-marshal." Then she took the spreads, deposited them in Fräulein Kubou's lap, and went straightway to the Court-marshal's office, where, arms akimbo, she declared, in a few well-set words, that it was her duty to buy said bedspreads, that she was now sorry she had not purchased twice as many as she did, that she would keep what she had, would give no houseroom to the rest, and would pay no laundry bills. This declaration was delivered with such emphasis, and "Old Heiner's" influence with the Empress was so

well established, that Count Eulenburg got scared and promised to take care of the bill, which, like the one aforementioned, travelled for weeks from department to department before a settlement could be secured.

When it is remembered that "the difficulties of the exchequer" occasionally interfere with the Kaiser and Kaiserin's predilection for cleanliness,—I recall the fact that their Majesties are sometimes unable to obtain clean sheets for their bed,—the statement that the royal servants, men and women, are kept exceedingly short in respect to towels and bedclothes will surprise no one. As a matter of fact, the allowance for the first-named article is two per week; the bed-linen is changed every month. And at the same time the liveried retainers are supposed to be paragons of cleanliness!

One evening, when we were talking in Her Majesty's dressing-room of the vagaries of Prince Frederick Leopold, the Countess Bassewitz remarked that His Royal Highness compelled his valets and the chasseur, which latter serves him at table, to bathe two or three times a day, morning, noon, and night; that is, always before they come into personal contact with him.

"That is extravagant," said Her Majesty; "but persons of our rank cannot insist too strongly upon the daily bath for their attendants."

"If there are enough bath-rooms!" I could not resist the temptation to throw out this hint.

"Well," said the Kaiserin, "I suppose there is a sufficient number in *our* palaces, at least here and in the Schloss."

"I beg Your Majesty's pardon," I spoke up; "here, as well as in Berlin, we have but two bath-rooms for servants,—one for the men, one for the women."

The Empress gave me a startled look. "Two bath-rooms?" she gasped.

"T-w-o," I repeated; "and not only the people of the body-service, but all the liveried and uniformed men and women in the palace—coachmen, *fourriers*, chasseurs, and heads of the household departments—are expected to use them."

"*Mein Liebe*," said the Empress, in her haughtiest tone, "you are evidently misinformed," and, rising from the arm-chair, she shook off her dressing sacque with a little shudder, as if to repel an unclean sensation. "I do so hate to speak of matters of that kind," she added, dismissing us with a curt bow.

What would Her Majesty have thought if I had continued in my revelations, gathered at random during my long connection with the household, for the scarcity of bath-rooms is not the most disgraceful evidence of penury at the Prussian Court, by far. The two eighteen by thirty-six inch huckaback towels given out every Saturday must suffice for the casual bath as well as for the every-day ablutions. The servants' wash-bowls are little tin affairs, holding less than three pints; foot-tubs and pitchers are tabooed, together with other conveniences. But that is not all. The toilets for the servants are located on the back-stair landings, which are lighted by kerosene lamps day and night, and one closet must do for every twenty-six persons. If the palace is ever visited by an epidemic, the air will be laden with "I-told-you-so's" in high and low quarters.

A command of the Emperor or the Empress alone can change this disgraceful state of affairs. When a courtier draws the attention of those in authority to the matter, it is but to hear the old refrain: "No money," "All the department treasuries are empty." What, then, becomes of the fifteen millions and a half which the Kaiser reserves per annum for the maintenance of himself and

family? So far as the money is not mortgaged beforehand or absorbed by the expenses for travelling, entertaining, Her Majesty's toilets, the building craze and other crazes, the expenses of the Court or Courts swallow them. The Berlin Schloss, you must know, is always kept ready for immediate occupancy, all servants being at their posts and all fires lit. "See the ogre that devoured twenty-five millions!" were the damnatory words hurled at Marie Antoinette and her fat husband as the royal chariot rolled into Paris on October 6, 1789, "escorted by hunger and rascality."

Twenty-five millions!—fuel for the revolution of the end of the eighteenth century, but not a patch on the expenses of the German Court of to-day! Since William II came to the throne, the Prussian people have paid one hundred and sixty millions of marks into the civil list, and of these, one hundred millions were expended to keep up the pageant of superficial splendor that goes to make the Court. For one thing, the salary list is enormous, not on account of many-noughted items as much as because of its prodigious length. There are, altogether, some fifteen hundred persons on it, fully two-thirds of whom have to be clothed and fed, as well as paid. The great officials are not provided with uniforms or dress, it is true, but receive very considerable allowances for that purpose, and also table-money, if for some reason or other they are not invited to or stay away from the meals. All the employees, moreover, are entitled to mileage and board fees if taken on a junketing. To illustrate, I append the remuneration of some of the high officials, and of their Majesties' body-attendants.

The grand-masters of both Kaiser and Kaiserin and the several House-marshals receive thirty thousand marks per year salary, live in royal villas rent free, and carriages and

horses for themselves and family are at their disposal for private and official use. The Court, besides, furnishes their households with two servants, wearing the imperial delivery, and as many house-maids. Their mileage equals that of a commanding general, and as travelling fees they receive thirty marks per day. When their Excellencies want to eat at home or dine out, they need but notify the chef in order to be entitled to another fifteen marks per day.

Her Majesty's grand-mistress, the Countess Brockdorff, having no household of her own, occupies a splendid apartment in the royal residence, and receives the same salary, mileage, and travelling fees as the gentlemen above mentioned, while two lackeys and carriages galore are subject to her orders. The Kaiser even pays mileage for her maid, though the girl denies ever having received a pfennig of it. As to Her Excellency, they say she is as sharp after perquisites as the devil is after the souls of poor sinners, and a month seldom passes that she does not hand in a bill for so and so many meals missed.

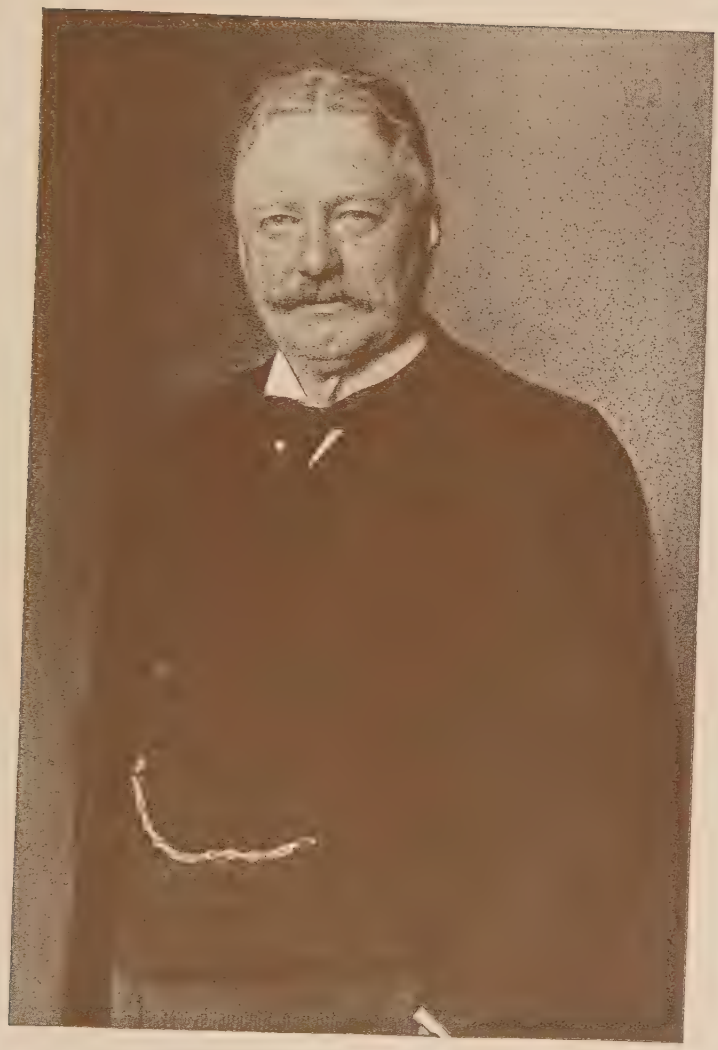
There is an idea abroad that dames of the Court endure the caprices of their august mistress and the monotony of life in the gilded cage out of sheer devotion to royalty, or on account of the distinction it confers upon the appointee; but this, I am happy to say for my own sake, is not true. We receive a salary of six thousand marks per annum, have royal lackeys and maids and carriages, as well as board and lodging, and travelling fees amounting to twenty-seven marks per day. The adjutants are paid by the state and Empire, but receive mileage and travelling fees, uniform, table, and livery moneys, out of the Kaiser's pocket.

The Emperor's valets receive between one hundred and forty and one hundred and fifty marks salary per month,

besides board and lodging, and either liveries or remuneration for dress-suits, like all the rest of the servants and officials hereafter named. To the married men, lodgings for their families in royal houses are assigned. The wardrobemen's salaries vary between eighty and one hundred marks per month, according to the age of servitude. Ebeling, the Kaiser's body-groom, has one hundred and ten marks, Herr Rieger, his picturesque gun-charger, one hundred and fifty marks per month, and the other chasseurs and stable officials receive from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and thirty.

Her Majesty's body-service includes Fräulein von Haake, woman of the bed-chamber, salary one hundred and fifty marks per month; two wardrobe-women, salary eighty-five to ninety-five marks per month; two wardrobe manservants, salary one hundred marks and seventy-five marks, respectively, per month; the caretaker of the royal bed, Frau Louise Schade, has forty-five marks per month, besides board and lodging, and thirty marks per month for her dresses. Her Majesty's two seamstresses, engaged all the year round, receive two marks per day and board and lodging.

The Kaiserin employs three valets, whose senior, Herr Nolte, served under the late Empress Augusta. He is a Catholic, and was chiefly retained to give the lie to the story that he, together with others in her service, had persuaded her late Majesty to embrace the Roman faith. He receives one hundred and fifty marks per month. His two colleagues have twenty marks less. Her Majesty's five footmen (*Kammerlackaien*) have one hundred and twenty marks per month; her body-coachman, Polte, receives one hundred and thirty marks, and her body riding-master two hundred marks. The *Kammerjäger*, who wait at table, have from one hundred and fifty to two hundred marks



Prince von Bulow

per month, besides lodging, and the *fourriers*, or under-stewards, receive as much.

The above-mentioned functionaries, all of them body-servants, comprise only an infinitesimal part of the total number employed (to illustrate how many there are, I need but say that the Court-marshal's office has sixty different kinds of employees on its staff), but the amount of their salaries conveys a correct idea of the wages paid at the Prussian Court. They are not large compared with American and English wages, but, considering the number of individuals on the list, sum up a staggering total, inclusive of mileage and other travelling fees. I forgot to mention that Her Majesty employs twelve chambermaids for her own use, all of them trim, sturdy girls. They receive thirty marks per month in wages and twenty marks for dress, besides board and lodging, of course. The cost of the clothes of the men-servants and uniformed officials exceeds, I am told, that of their keep, which is not to be wondered at, as their dress, black and silver interlaced with red, white ties, stockings and pumps, is kept up to the highest standard. Indeed, the men always look as if they had just emerged from Herr Rust's shop. Rust is the royal employee under whose discriminating eye the different styles of livery are manufactured.

The salaries of all servants receiving board-wages are paid in advance on the third of each month; but as the thirty or forty-five marks allowed in lieu of board are disbursed *post-numerando*, the men and women live always ahead of their income, a condition not conducive to thrift, especially where husband and wife live separate the greater part of the year, the first changing his residence with that of the Court from time to time, the latter remaining in one of the houses belonging to the crown, either in Potsdam or Berlin. Every once in a while discontent arises on that

account, and a change of pay-day is as often promised, but the old order of things is continued, nevertheless, on the plea of poverty.

Yes, poverty, downright close-fisted want of money! That their Majesties must not be made to feel it goes without saying, and as the administrators of the household refuse to bridle their own, their colleagues', and the titled *entourage's* appetite for emoluments, the grind begins downstairs.

Once, during a summer when we were staying in Wilhelmshöhe, I happened to ask my coachman, an employee of the royal house, how he liked the change from sandy Brandenburg to the beautiful Hesse country.

"At Your Ladyship's orders," he answered, promptly, "I would like it still better if the mountain air did not make one so confoundedly hungry."

"Why, Peter," I said, "you have your regular fees, and a man like you ought to be able to live here very comfortably on three marks a day."

"I could, if I got it; but we have been cut down to half that amount ever since last winter. First it was given out that there was no money available, afterward we were told the three marks board-wages, formerly paid on all journeys, would be allowed only when the Court visited foreign countries. So, instead of saving a little when travelling, we servants are obliged to spend part of our salary to help out the board-wages."

I assure you I felt a little ashamed when, next month, I received the full amount of my fees at the rate of twenty-seven marks per day. The Court-marshal's office, that cut the flunky's meagre stipend in two, made no attempt to discriminate between inland voyages and journeys abroad in the case of the highly-paid and ornamental functionaries!

"Shirking responsibilities toward servants is mighty small business," said a high official of the Empress Frederick's Court, who visited us about that time on behalf of Her Majesty; "but what do you think of an Emperor who forces his servants to advance him money, and quite considerable sums at that?" And His Excellency went on to explain that Prussian *fourriers* and other servants, men and women, when despatched to other cities by the Court-marshals, must pay for their transportation out of their own pockets. "Neither do they receive money for expenses," he said.

"But how do you know this?" I inquired.

"From Count Eulenburg himself. He sent four women from Berlin to Homburg to prepare the old Schloss for a visit of the Emperor,—one with the linen, another to take care of the silver, the rest to put the rooms in order. They stopped at Kronberg[1] overnight, and borrowed money right and left, to procure food, they said. When informed of these proceedings, I questioned the girls. They told me they had spent their last money for railway fares, and could get nothing to eat in Homburg until the kitchen crew arrived from Berlin; that is, three or four days later. The circumstances struck me as so extraordinary that I interpellated Count Eulenburg about them when the Court arrived in our neighborhood. To my utter amazement he bore out the women's statements. 'Where should the money for advances of that kind come from?' he said. 'We pay all compulsory accounts at the beginning of the month, and what is left must be held at their Majesties' disposal!' You see," concluded the courtier, "Eulenburg admits that his Emperor compels the servants to advance money on business of his own."

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[1] Kronberg, near Homburg. In the neighborhood is Empress Frederick's castle, called Friedrichshof.

I reported what I had heard to Countess Brockdorff. "It is only too true," said Her Excellency. "I have repeatedly remonstrated with Count Eulenburg on that account, but one cannot squeeze blood from a stone, you know. I am ashamed to admit it, but we cannot get along without these forced loans while the exchequer is overburdened. But I think the marshal's office might be more discriminating in *choosing* its creditors. Only single men and girls should be sent on journeys, for the supposition is that they have a little money put aside. The salary of the married people is usually spent during the first week after pay-day, and if ordered away, they have to borrow to get to the place of destination."

Under Herr von Liebenau it once happened that the royal attendants received an advance on their mileage and travelling expenses; namely, when their Majesties, then Prince and Princess William, accompanied by an immense suite, went to the Queen's Jubilee. By this bit of non-Prussian liberality hangs a tale. No sooner had the Court returned to Potsdam than Herr von Liebenau demanded a strict accounting of the moneys disbursed, and, by applying the most niggardly estimate on each and every item, he succeeded in unravelling numerous instances of "extravagance." These servants—think of it!—had eaten English breakfasts in England, instead of the customary coffee and rolls, and had paid London prices for beer, which are considerably higher than those prevailing in Potsdam. So the bills were ruthlessly cut, and the next salary day saw many clinched teeth, many a tear, when it developed that the difference between the advance and the reduced bills had been deducted from the wages. It is not quite safe to mention the Jubilee year among the Kaiser's servants.

The continual trips of servants between Potsdam and Berlin are responsible for everlasting quibbles between the

employees and the treasury. Count Pückler, formerly in charge of the travelling accounts, issued an order years ago commanding all members of the untitled retinue to utilize zone-tariff trains only, as their rates are considerably lower than those of fast trains. The men and women would gladly comply with this request, but cannot always do so on account of the urgency of business intrusted to them by their Majesties. When, afterward, the bills for railway fare are presented, the most abominable rows ensue, and servants valuing their standing with the Court-marshal's office very frequently suffer the loss of their advances rather than fight for what is due them, for though they may be ever so much in the right, they dare not attempt to prove their case, it being against etiquette to invoke the testimony of their Majesties. It often happens that the Kaiser or Kaiserin orders an attendant to proceed to the capital instantly. Now, if the Court-marshal doubts that the command was issued in that form, the correct way for him would be to ask the master or mistress, but that would be against tradition. Besides, to call in doubt an employee's veracity is a much less circumspect procedure. So the flunkies and maids, in their small way, help to support the spectacle of imperial splendor enacted before all the world,—the many marks and pfennigs wrung from them contribute to the royal radiance that blinds the eyes of onlookers!

When I asked Madame von Larisch to increase the scanty allowance of linen given to my servants, the housekeeper answered: "I would like to, but cannot, as funds for labor and material in the wash-kitchen just suffice for a stipulated amount of laundry. Half a dozen extra towels per week would upset calculations."

"But if I furnish the soap?"

"Your Ladyship is very generous, but the employees of the wash-kitchen have all the work they can do now, and

the Court-marshal's office says it is impossible to increase the staff. Besides, we have not the material in stock. When the household linen is given out on Saturdays, the presses are as empty as the proverbial nutshell."

The prevailing penury even reaches to the steps of the throne. Can you imagine an Empress being in need of a couple of toothbrush-holders? Well, Auguste Victoria wanted some for a week and longer, and could not get them. It happened in December, 1894, and I refer to it, not as something extraordinary, but merely to illustrate a point. At the time mentioned Her Majesty had seen some fancy toothbrush-holders in the bedroom of her sister, Louise Sophie, wife of Prince Frederick Leopold. Her Majesty inquired where they had been bought, and, on coming home, ordered me to procure a couple. As Herr Nolte was going to Berlin, I instructed him to bring them along. Next morning, Her Majesty asked why the holders had not been procured. Herr Nolte was called in. "I tried to get an order from Herr Baron von Mirbach," reported the man, "but, there being no funds for such a purpose, he sent me to Count Eulenburg. His Excellency, despite my respectful protest, insisted that the matter must go through the usual routine, and sent me away."

"Routine,—and what may that be?" asked the Empress, impatiently, after Herr Nolte had been dismissed.

"The Court-marshal's office," I made answer, "will forward a letter to the store demanding an estimate of the article wanted. Then the royal porcelain manufactory will be asked whether the price is fair or not, and, that being settled, the various chiefs of departments will be required to furnish the money, each, of course, trying to 'unload' upon the other. In this way from six to ten days will be spent."

"But I will have the things to-day," said the Empress. "Notify the *fourrier* to send for them."

I did so then and there, and repeated the order every morning for an entire week, but only on the afternoon of the tenth day after Her Majesty's visit of discovery in Glienecke were the holders produced. It had taken all this time to scrape together twelve marks necessary to procure the much-coveted articles, and Her Majesty had made twelve separate and distinct rows about the matter.

A similar incident happened a few months later, when Her Majesty ordered a bedscreen to be recovered in one of the rooms which the Duchess of Glücksburg was to occupy for a time. "See that it is done at once," she said to Madame von Larisch. "I want fine mulle used, and the screen must be finished by to-night." So a letter, conveying Her Majesty's command, was despatched to Baron von Lyncker by the castellan. "All right," said the Housemarshal, "I will talk with Her Majesty about it at table."

"Pardon me, Her Majesty will brook no delay. She said her sister would be here to-morrow noon, and that all preparations for Her Highness must be finished to-day. Besides," added the castellan, slyly, "it will not be necessary to pay for the stuff at once."

Borrowers are always liberal, and so the Baron authorized the sending of a messenger into town for the purpose of finding out how much mulle was needed and how much it would cost. It took two people and a pair of horses three hours to accomplish this feat, and as Herr von Lyncker had gone to Berlin when they returned, his signature for the purchase could not be obtained until next morning. Then the horses and men went to work a second time, and finally the stuff was turned over to the upholstery department in the Palais, which, before work was begun, had to file an estimate as to the time required for the job. That done,

the artisan commenced on the screen at about the same time when Her Majesty paid a second visit to the guest chambers in company of Countess Keller and Mademoiselle von Haake, both of whom carried divers tidies and cushions from the Empress's own room with which to complete the decorations.

When Auguste Victoria observed that the screen was still missing, she was furious. The housekeeper, the castellan, and chief *fourrier* were ordered to report at once, and, without giving them a chance to explain, Her Majesty abused these people roundly for neglecting the "all-highest" command. At last, Madame von Larisch succeeded in placing the guilt where it belonged, and as the upholsterer simultaneously sent word that the screen would be ready in an hour's time, Her Majesty calmed down.

Scenes and annoyances like the above, growing out of the chronic want of funds, are, however, not limited to demands for extraordinary expenditure. We go through the same farce every time a piece of china or glass in one of the bedrooms is broken, for the Prussian Court has no duplicates of such necessary articles as wash-pitchers, bowls, pails, soap-dishes, or water-bottles. When one of these things in the Kaiserin's chamber, for instance, is smashed, Frau Schade must carry the pieces to the *Haushofmeister*, who lays them before the House-marshal, who lays them before the Court-marshal, who lays them before the treasurer.

Then the treasurer authorizes the making of an estimate to replace the articles, the two marshals countersign the document, and the *Haushofmeister* sends a wagon into town to fetch it, or orders it sent from Berlin. Of course, all this takes time; often several days are spent in winding and unwinding red tape, and in the interim Her Majesty has to get along as best she can without a glass for her

tooth-water sometimes, and on other occasions without that piece of furniture which the Duchess of Orleans describes as essential to life's true comfort.

So much for our difficulties at home; but poverty stares the German Empress in the face even when she travels with her immense suite of ladies and gentlemen in waiting, marshals, equerries, masters of the hounds, valets, chamberlains, treasurers, her overseers of the plate, gun-chargers, mouth-cooks, and the cloud of footmen, couriers, coachmen, and grooms. As long as I can remember, the Kaiserin never owned enough trunks to carry, besides her toilets, the linen for the imperial bed and bath rooms,[1] and that despite the fact that the Court is almost continuously on the road.

"The mistress of the linen-presses must furnish baskets and cases," decrees the grand-master every time this emergency arises.

"Beg your pardon," answers Fräulein Kubou, "I have scarcely enough baskets to carry the laundry from the palace to the wash-house."

"The *Kammerfrau* must provide the baggage utensils."

Mademoiselle von Haake swears she does not know wherein to pack the Kaiserin's dresses, and so it happens quite often that Her Majesty's linen is sent on a journey in dry-goods cases or even in card-board boxes,—odds and ends from the store-room.

That the army of servants does not eat up the enormous appropriations for the royal Court, and that the administration is finical rather than extravagant, has been shown, and I may add that the costs of the entertainments, private and official ones, are likewise limited. The royal

[1] Her Majesty always carries an entire outfit of household linen along with her on her travels, unless she is visiting royalty.

table, never luxurious, is hardly better provided than the average Berlin *table-d'hôte* at three marks at the great *Abfütterungen* (feedings), as the obligatory dinners are called by Count Eulenburg,—visiting army officers, who ought to know, at least say so,—and the arrangements of the *Grand-échanson* and *Grand-écuyer tranchant* at the Court balls are such as to permit only every ninth or tenth of the invited persons to obtain a swallow of third-rate champagne and a sandwich.

The visits of royalty are made occasions of great display, of course; reasonably liberal extra appropriations are made to the chef at such times, and lest the chasseurs make a mistake and pour out inferior vintage for a visiting Excellency or Highness, all courtiers get the best of champagnes, which otherwise are furnished to their Majesties only, but even then the Court-marshal manages to save an honest penny here and there.

Count Herbert Bismarck, returning from a trip to England in 1892, set abroad a story that the Prince of Wales kept away from Berlin because he could not get any of his people to accompany him, which is, of course, nonsense, and was probably never intended to be taken seriously; but it is a fact that during His Royal Highness's last official visit to our Court, in March, 1889, his employees, from valet down to groom, were constantly brawling with Herr von Liebenau on account of what they described as "starvation diet." When the typical German breakfast, consisting of coffee, milk, two rolls, a diminutive pat of butter, and two pieces of sugar, was sent in to the valet, he demanded steak and eggs in addition, and so did the footmen and grooms. These protests were treated with silent contempt by Herr von Liebenau, but when the noon meal called forth similar criticisms, he threatened to inform His Royal Highness of the men's "unruly behavior."

"By all means, do so," replied the Englishmen; "that is what we want. Our master will then engage board for us at a hotel. That is the kind of a gentleman he is."

And so the battle waged merrily on; only one bottle of beer was allowed to the foreigners, and they asked permission to provide their own drinks; they refused to eat cold pork and potato-salad for supper, and when told that it was Her Majesty's favorite dish, their remarks approached dangerously near to *lèse majesté*. Altogether Albert Edward's men had a very hard time of it at the Schloss, and Herr von Liebenau cursed them, in the presence of Her Majesty, "as the hungriest and most impudent set of menials" he ever encountered.

"If they stay another week," he vowed, "my whole force will be demoralized, and I should not know where to obtain money enough to fill their ravenous pouches. I beg Your Majesty's pardon, but that is the only expression that fits the situation."

Though almost every royal visit begets demonstrations of that kind, majesty itself was made but once to suffer the humiliation of being called upon to help an attendant to obtain the necessary food in its proud halls. It happened on June 21, 1892. The day before, the King and Queen of Italy had arrived in Potsdam, and a state dinner was to be given in their honor at 5 P.M. On the morning preceding this grand occasion, Queen Marguerite discovered that a lace shawl, which she intended to wear in the procession to the Marble Hall, had been left behind, and she sent her woman of the bed-chamber to Berlin to procure another. This lady, belonging to an aristocratic family, returned to the palace at two o'clock, and called at once for her dinner, as she was to superintend Her Majesty's toilet, set for an hour later. In parentheses it should be remarked that it was a broiling hot day. Fancy, then, the thoughts of the

Italian dame, when the footman brought her lentil soup, with fresh pork, a piece of warmed-over pot-roast, six potatoes, and a bottle of beer. Lentils, pork, pot-roast, and beer! And presently she was to dress her Queen, a lady of the finest sensibilities! The *Italienne's* inborn aversion to this essentially Teutonic menu was almost as great as her official horror. She rang for Mademoiselle von Haake. "Please tell your mistress," she said, politely but firmly, "that I cannot, and, moreover, dare not, eat this stuff. I shall have to ride into town to get my dinner, and if no carriage is to be had, I will take the next train to Berlin."

"But what will the Queen say, if you are not here to dress her for the banquet."

"Her Majesty will be late, of course, but she would rather be late than see me starve. I know you Germans look down upon us poor Italians, but at *my* mistress's house every visitor is provided with food suitable to her rank."

Fräulein von Haake was thunderstruck. I can see her yet, poor soul! as she slunk into the parlor where we were sitting, and at the door waited for an opportunity to catch Her Majesty's eye. The Kaiserin, thinking something was wrong with her costume, sent me to inquire what was the matter. "Only Her Majesty can prevent a scandal," she whispered: "it concerns our guests." Alarmed by my report, the Empress went over to Haake. A short while later she called out, in sharp, commanding tones: "Count Pückler."

The Court-marshal ran to Her Majesty. "The kitchen is in your charge?" she demanded, brusquely. Every one in the room could hear her words.

"At Your Majesty's commands."

"Then see to it that every one of their Majesties' attendants—*every one*, I say—is provided with food from my own kitchen. Go and carry out my orders, and,"

added the Kaiserin, as His Lordship was about to withdraw, "make your apologies to Queen Marguerite's woman of the bed-chamber. This lady must be furnished with a freshly-cooked meal within twenty minutes, or to-day's affair may be delayed."

These petty savings of the household, effected by fair and foul means, are swallowed up by incessant attempts to promote grandeur and cater to the reconstruction craze of the imperial master.

"Find out what 'oniomania' means," said the Princess of Meiningen to her *Hofdame*, suddenly, at a *soirée* that marked their Highnesses' departure from the Thiergarten villa in the spring of 1893. Madame von Berger went through the parlors, and finally stepped into the conservatory to look for a professional man capable of obliging her mistress. She came back after a few minutes. "It is a word coined by a French savant," she reported, "and describes a mental condition known as the buying craze."

"Then it does not apply to my big brother," said the Princess. "William can very well withstand the impulse to acquire things—for others, at least. Ah, now I have it," she continued, after a while: "it is the instinct of destruction that goads him to *unchevaleresque* acts against his sister.[1] I am too self-conscious to suit him. Nothing that others do without his assistance or personal supervision appeals to him. Whether it is the decoration of a hall, or an arrangement of bric-à-brac, it must come down and be remodelled before it meets with his approval. I used to laugh at William's ravings against the new Reichstag building when he said nothing would give him greater pleasure

[1] The Meiningens were compelled to give up the lease of the Thiergarten villa, as the Emperor refused to abide by Emperor Frederick's contract and pay the rent.

than to see the 'box' in ruins so that he might utilize the stones and pillars to rear another pile, but I fail to see the humor of it now. Bernhardt and I thought it funny to see a room in the Schloss, just finished with gilded stucco, paintings and wainscotings, in a state of demolition at our next visit, but when we were told that the work of reconstructing the interior arrangements of the palace had cost twice as much as was first estimated, His Majesty's want of sympathy with the ideas of others, the rapidity with which he changes his mind about building schemes that some months or weeks previous found his enthusiastic approval, began to alarm us. Now we see to what it leads."

When Princess Charlotte spoke thus to a few intimate friends, she had the best reason in the world for quarrelling with the Emperor, yet her statements were in no wise exaggerated. Hardly had the masons, plasterers, carpenters, painters, decorators, furnishers, and artists left the reconstructed Schloss, after a year's work, than the Kaiser ordered the greater number of rooms torn up again. Here a classic painting set into the ceiling was too dark, there the stucco was not heavy enough; in another hall the old-fashioned and very beautiful fire-places were "spoiling everything," and nothing would do but to have new plans drawn up a twelvemonth after the original ones were audited. The army of artisans was recalled to the castle and chaos was re-established, while the Kaiser went on his visiting tours to the German sovereigns. When, after a month's absence, His Majesty inspected his winter home a second time and saw his own ideas represented, he was happy, and expressed his entire satisfaction before the whole Court, but that did not hinder him from proclaiming "the library a shabby barn, resembling a school-room," the day after. As a matter of fact, the library was then a beautiful apartment, beautiful in a style that harmonized

with its purpose. The Kaiser's command tumbled the fine stucco walls and ceiling to the ground, and senseless ornamentation, profuse and chaotic, took the place of the former noble simplicity, while the heavy book-cases, the arrangement of which had required many weeks of labor, remained standing in the dust and confusion, it being impossible to move them in the short space of time allowed for the reconstruction. When, finally, the Court moved into the Schloss, His Majesty regaled us, on one of the first evenings, at supper, with the story of an "awful" experience he had had.

"I was alone in my study," said he, "and desired to see the effect of the electric light on Liewes Verschnur's painting of the Great Elector's Navy. I tried to turn on the current, but in vain sought for a button. I searched high and low, but could not find one. I rang for my adjutants, but these gentlemen were as unsuccessful as I had been. Then we called in the chasseurs and footmen: the same result. The *fourrier* finally informed me that the lighting apparatus had been placed outside of the doors in all but the bedrooms. Now, this is sheer insanity, and it must be altered at once. The electricians shall commence work to-morrow."

Now followed a third invasion of workmen, but my mistress's half-hearted resolve that it should be the last was not realized, for presently William turned his attention to the furniture. The chairs and tables in the Pillar Room, His Majesty's own selection, by the way, were of fine cedar wood inlaid with gold and mother-of-pearl,—a delightful effect, but not rich enough for modern rodomontadist taste. Another outfit was bought, treble the cost of the first, heavy, stiff, cumbersome arm-chairs, with frames of bronze and upholstered in imitation tapestry. These chairs are not in harmony with the character of the room; the fact that part of the material is unreal gives them an

air of cheapness despite their high price, but the Kaiser improved on his own taste, and so all was well—for a time.

And the White Hall of the castle! William has meddled with it ever since the day he turned his mother out of her apartments in the Neues Palais, and the result is an architectural and decorative nightmare, stilted, forever unfinished, bleak and empty. Alterations to-day decreed and inaugurated with much trumpetings invariably prove disappointments of the morrow, and are forthwith abolished to make room for the realization of some new momentary photographs on the imperial mind. Often we hear, for weeks at a time, nothing but White Hall talk at table and other occasions when the Emperor is present. Now it is to be a Marble Hall, next the "symphonies of silver" are to be revived, which Frederick William created in the shape of balconies, balustrades, tables, pillars, and mighty chandeliers, all of the sterling metal, and which Frederick turned into the melting-pots during the Seven Years' War. "Only white and gold, set off by red velvet, are to be employed in the decorations." "No: yellow silk is the modern imperial color," and so on and so on. After the birth of the Ægir song, the Kaiser had the musicians' gallery reconstructed after his own plans: being a competitor for Wagnerian honors, he thought it incumbent upon him to imitate the maestro, who invented the invisible orchestra, in other respects also; but after ten thousand marks had been wasted in the enterprise, it turned out that the remodelled box was entirely unfit for use. All the royal leaders were successively invited to perform in it and all declined, pleading lack of room and acoustic difficulties. At present the band performs in the *Diplomatenloge*, the Ambassadors have been shifted to the royal box, and royalty is without an up-stairs home in the White Hall.

One day the Kaiser surprised the Court by saying: "Why must it be a *White* Hall? I think of turning it into a *Green* Hall. It would be something new." And, *presto!* one corner of the state-room was covered with imitation marble of a yellowish-green tint. Three weeks were consumed in making this innovation, and twelve days in removing it. Result: nine thousand marks thrown to the dogs! The next plan evolved was a widening of the hall by twenty metres taken off the court-yard. Several gangs of workmen were set to work at once pulling up the flagstones and digging. They fought water and quicksands four months in succession, and laid foundations strong enough for a two-hundred-foot tower. And then, all of a sudden, the big ditch and its costly contents were covered up. After one hundred thousand marks had been fooled away, the money gave out, and, besides, His Majesty had his eye on another improvement. The colonnades which connect the barrack palaces opposite the Neues Palais were to be reconstructed, strengthened, and beautified. Derricks were set up, fences and other eyesores erected, and for a quarter of a year fifty or sixty masons and stone-cutters encamped in the *Sandhof*, to be discharged long before they had finished the work. The colonnades are now closed.

The White Hall, however, cannot be left in a half-finished state, though experimenting goes bravely on, year in, year out. Every once in a while it must be put into thorough order for some Court festivity or government act, and, to cover up and hide the ravages of this reconstruction-mad King, whitewashers, painters, gilders, and decorators are put to work in the hydrocephalus, as Herr von Wedell calls it. So the Court is always in an uproar, whether we are in Potsdam or Berlin, and when, for one reason or another, hammer and trowel are laid aside, His

Majesty quickly finds ways and means to bring them back. In the summer of 1897, for instance, he gave permission that the bedrooms and sitting-rooms of the *Hofdamen* in the Berlin Schloss should be redecorated and refurnished, and when all was finished, he telegraphed from Homburg that their *salons* should likewise undergo a thorough overhauling. That order meant nothing short of re-establishing chaos in the rooms just finished, for the ladders and scaffolding had to be carried through them, there being no corridors in connection with the departments.

But despite these enormous building exploits, the palaces are very far from modern, because there is no method in the work. Everything is done piecemeal; innovations of to-day are abandoned upon second thought. The very idea of concentration is wanting.

To show how things are done, I will narrate a rather ludicrous incident, which happened in the winter of 1893, shortly after His Majesty's Turkish smoking-room was finished, an apartment situated in the wing of the Berlin Schloss overlooking the Elector's Bridge. One evening, several guests, among them the Princess Frederick Charles, Prince Pless, Prince and Princess Radziwill, and the Hereditary Prince and Princess of Hohenzollern, were to be introduced, after supper, to the splendors and comforts of the Oriental chamber. That the smoking-room, at the time being, could be reached only by way of the private apartment of one of the adjutants was so small a matter that it had never been given a second thought!

At the conclusion of the repast, we formed the usual stately procession,—at the head the *Haushofmeister* and the chamberlain *du jour*, the adjutants coming second, and immediately after them Her Majesty upon the arm of the Prince of Hohenzollern, the Kaiser conducting his great-aunt, and the rest following according to rank and station.

We passed from the *Sternen Saal* to the adjutant's *salon*, and were about to enter the bed-chamber connecting with the Oriental room, when the Kaiser cried: "See here, Pless, there is one of the old-fashioned electric lighters that I banished from the rest of the castle. Touch the button and there will be a surprise for you."

Our procession had stopped at His Majesty's first words, and Johann-Heinrich XII advanced to do as he was asked, while at the same time the *Haushofmeister* drew back the *portières*. There was indeed a surprise! The occupant of the chamber, Adjutant von Scholl, had changed his clothes before supper, and his servant had neglected to put the room in order. So the floor and chairs and bed—the latter looked as if it had been slept in—were strewn with wearing apparel in picturesque confusion. Here a pair of trousers, their nether mates in a heap on the floor; a vest, torn under the arm, hanging at the window; a dirty shirt on the sofa, and collars galore on the table. A pair of gray socks reposed near the door, and Her Majesty would have stumbled over a boot had not her escort kicked it aside. But the worst of all stood in the centre of the room, midway between the two doors,—an unprintable thing. How we passed it without a *faux pas* is a mystery to me! When we reached the Turkish Room, the Hereditary Princess threw herself upon an ottoman and laughed till the tears ran down her cheeks. "Oh, *mon dieu, mon dieu!*" she cried over and over again, "*c'est tout comme chez nous,*" a tell-tale remark which friends of the royal couple, who visit at their villa in Augusta Strasse, Potsdam, will appreciate.

After this, another entrance to the smoking-room, through the adjutant's *salon*, was provided.

To the reconstruction moloch millions are sacrificed year by year, but the expenses connected with the Kaiser's travels are even larger, and in the account thereof the cost of his

state visits to the foreign courts is, strange to say, not the most excessive item. True, when we went to Rome in the spring of 1893, the King and Queen of Italy said His Majesty's train of eighty people reminded them of the deluge; but our three days' stay at Hannover in the winter of 1891 cost nearly half as much as the tour in the Peninsula, namely, one hundred and twenty thousand marks, one-third of which was expended for carpets and rugs. The royal castles, you must know, are empty barns for the most part, and whenever either of the Majesties visits the residences in Breslau, Königsberg, Cassel, Wiesbaden, Homburg, and Stettin, or when William goes to his various hunting-boxes, whole car-loads of furniture, pictures, decorative material, and all the necessary silver, linen, and kitchen utensils must be sent ahead, together with a full force of servants, horses and carriages, food and forage. Fancy, then, the tumult occasioned by the meeting between the Romanoffs and Hohenzollerns in the capital of Silesia in the summer of 1896, when *two* palaces had to be furnished from top to bottom! The robbing of Peter to pay Paul was almost pitiful to behold: my mistress actually had to give up her favorite damask curtains, which she bought out of her own money for Wilhelmshöhe, to garnish the connubial couch of Nicholas and Alix, while she herself had to sleep in a bed once occupied by the plebeian King Jerome, brought on from Cassel. The *pièces de résistance* in the home improvised for their Russian Majesties in Breslau were taken from the consignment of Empire furniture, which one of the *Kurfürsts* of Hesse bought in Paris some fifty years ago and for which payment was refused. His Royal Highness's Diet had to liquidate the bill in the end, and when the Prussians annexed the country, they promptly seized the furniture as one of the people's assets.

To conclude, confusion and red tape, extravagance and penury, go hand in hand at the Prussian Court; the preponderance of these incongruous qualities is felt in all departments of the service.

The young Princes, whom the nation furnishes with a lieutenant's salary beginning with their tenth birthday, must disburse the wages of their body-servants out of this meagre allowance; but when, a short while ago, Herr von Wedell protested against a million marks appropriation for reconstruction experiments, such as above described, the Kaiser silenced him with the words: "I thought you *liked* to be Minister of the Royal House."

CHAPTER XIII

"Madame," wrote an anonymous correspondent in July, 1894, "do you know what is the difference between you and Maria Leczinski? *Her* children died, while Louis the Fifteenth's illegitimate offspring flourished. To-day the Kaiser's Vienna baby is dead. I wonder if for the same reason which the physician of His Most Christian Majesty assigned for the demise of the Queen's children; namely, "that she had only the rinsings from the glass?"

That cruel letter, cruel, yet consoling in more than one way, arrived when the anonymous letter scandal was at its height and the little waif was about twelve years old.

Her mother was a beauteous Viennese, *Fräulein* Caroline Seiffert, one of the late Crown Prince Rudolph's set. To her belongs the distinction of being the only woman who, besides Auguste Victoria, bore a child to the Emperor.

Madame von Kotze insists that it was a spite-baby.

"And what on earth is a spite-baby?" I inquired.

"They had been making fun of Caroline—His Majesty, then Prince William, and the Prince Imperial—'as a little idiot, who did not know enough to have a child;' but, like the first Napoleon's love, Marguerite Bellisle (the girl General Bonaparte had with him in Egypt, or rather took away from one of his officers there),[1] the Wiener *beauté* said: 'If

[1] If she had borne him a son, Napoleon would probably have divorced Josephine for her sake. Mademoiselle Bellisle was married several times, but never had offspring.

I get only half a chance, I will show them who the idiot is.' In August or September, 1882, her child was born, two or three weeks after Eitel Fritz, the Kaiser's second son, saw the light at the Marble Palace."

I remembered the circumstances perfectly, and my question to Madame von Kotze was merely asked to help clear up, if possible, the authorship of the unsigned communications that had kept their Majesties and the Court in a turmoil for two years. I was one of many in the royal service and society generally who did not believe the Kotzes guilty, and have never had occasion to change this opinion. Jealousy was alleged to be the mainspring of the scandal,—Madame von Kotze's jealousy of Countess Fritz Hohenau's ascendency over the Kaiser. I put the question to disabuse my mind of any suspicions of that sort.

To return to William's infatuation for Mademoiselle Seiffert. That story was well known to the intimates of the late Crown Prince's circle.[1] "*Unser Fritz*" did not mind it much. Having been kept well in hand by his "Vicky" all through married life, I suspect he even took some mischievous delight in his son's escapade. Poor man! he was fond enough of that sort of thing, as his visit to the Court of the late Alphonse XII, so rich in adventure, proved. But in the Princess Imperial's eyes a *liaison* was little short of a crime. Pictures of the fourth George and Mrs. Fitz-Herbert, she told me once, arose before her mental eyes every time she thought of the matter. At that period, be it remembered, the history of Prince and Princess William's marriage was as fresh in everybody's memory as it is now obscure,—as fresh as were the incidents attending George's courtship with Caroline of Brunswick during the first ten years after Europe's gentleman

[1] Afterward Emperor Frederick.

par excellence had reeled into the Chapel Royal and hiccoughed out his vows of fidelity. Auguste Victoria was a much-abused woman then, though carrying out *her* part of the marriage agreement—to provide new Hohenzollerns—with the utmost loyalty. Indeed, so frequent were the stork's visits in the young household that the wife was unable to appear at the great Court festivals for three winters in succession, while her husband, full of resentment for his consort-by-statecraft, shamefully ignored her. And to crown it all,—this Vienna scandal!

Primarily, it was the outcome of the friendship between the two heirs destined to wear the most ancient and the newest imperial diadems. Being of the same age, and possessed of temperaments whose selfishness was only equalled by thirst for power, both commanded, if not much ready money, unlimited credit for certain extravagances. Rudolph, however, was far ahead of William in the knowledge of fashionable vice. Where the Prussian Prince boasted of sturdy conquests, the Archduke went him one better as a cynic of degenerate proclivities. In the Potsdam archives, not long ago, I came upon a stack of letters from the representatives of Prussia at the Vienna Congress, denouncing a state of morals that permitted the sons of the great Austrian nobles to keep mistresses (the emphasis is on the plural) at the age of thirteen or fourteen years. Similar observations might be made to-day in the Kaiserstadt,—and Rudolph was more than a noble!

The two young Princes, then twenty-four and twenty-five years old, considered it exquisite fun to revel in adulterous debauches, with the official world and society looking on, and the possibility of bothersome consequences was invited rather than dreaded by these hopeful roués.

Yet, when Mademoiselle Seiffert's telegram arrived in Berlin, Prince William did not feel in the devil-may-care

mood that had led him into the adventure, and his first serious misunderstanding with his sister Charlotte arose on account of a clever bit of poetry cited by Her Royal Highness "in honor of the occasion," as she expressed herself:

"*Vater werden ist nicht schwer,*
Aber's sein *um desto mehr.*"[1]

Caroline was not sentimental about the affair. Unlike Marie Vecsera, she had never dreamed of a diadem, or even a coronet, to gloss over her fall from virtue. She proved as selfish as her lover *pro tem.*, or as any other man, for that matter, might have been. Only by a short telegram sought she to reopen communication with the father; her next step was to formulate her demands at the German Embassy in her native city.

There were frantic messages from Prince Reuss, husband of the royal and imperious Marie: "I am neither a Eugène Beauharnais[2] nor a Talleyrand, who always had his pockets lined with mistresses," he wrote. "What have I to do with this affair?"

However, Prince Bismarck, who was friendly both to Reuss and William, at last persuaded the Ambassador to look into the case.

"A hundred thousand florins," said Mademoiselle Seiffert.

"Nonsense. The Prince owes you no more than hundreds of others. His Royal Highness denounces the baby as a harlequin."

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[1] "To become a father is not difficult, but to *be* one is."

[2] He referred to the time when Eugène Beauharnais, as Napoleon's aid, was obliged, like others in a similar position, to keep his eyes open for pretty women that might please his General and step-father.

"And what may that be, Your Grace?" asked the young mother, according to the diplomatic correspondence relating to the case.

"I mean to say that it cannot be his. It is made of too many pieces."

"Is it?" said Caroline, and drew the cover from the baby's left arm.

Prince Reuss said no more. His desire for argument and *bonmot* had alike vanished.

And little Wilhelmina, "the rinsing from the cup of pleasure," her father's counterfeit in the way of physical deformities and ailments, was the only natural child the Kaiser has had or is likely to have.

True, many noble Vienna dames, daughters and nieces and cousins of those who once boycotted the beautiful Sarah of Jersey not on account of her scandalous connection with the Prince Regent, but on account of her sleeping partnership in Coutts's bank,—those of the gay world continue in their efforts to ensnare the Kaiser. Every time His Majesty visits the Austrian capital he receives hundreds of love-letters from Countesses and Princesses who fairly throw themselves at his feet, for, under the shadow of the Hofburg, husbands are of that amiable type that never interfere with Madame's pleasure so long as they, the lords of creation, are allowed to please themselves.

"Your Majesty has the most beautiful eyes;" "The holy fire of idealism burns in your eyes: let them rest upon Your Majesty's humblest subject;" "Your eyes are those of a King: allow my poor self to bask in their sunshine but for ever so short a while," are extracts from epistles the Kaiser brought home from time to time and read to Her Majesty. From their tone, the contents of the letters he kept to himself may be imagined. But the wiles of these sirens are as idle as the persecutions of the

Vienna Uranus brethren, or sisters, as they call themselves, associations of abnormally-inclined individuals who claim to possess a female soul in a man's body, and whose motto reads: "*À bas les femmes.*" These German and Slav colleagues of the French "Knights of the Rosary" (the latter club is headed by the Marquis of Larochefoucauld and Josephine Pélladan, and is highly respectable) claim the Emperor as one of their own, although there is no apparent reason for their surmise, save the fact that Frederick the Great seems to have belonged to this unhappy class of men. Leaving that arrogation in dispute, they appear to base their assumption on a circumstance that should strike any unbiased mind as most creditable,—upon the non-existence of a recognized royal mistress.

These feminine men, infinitely more detestable and withal more debased than the so-called masculine women, who are often merely ridiculous, while at other times they compel one's admiration because of the superior intellects found in their ranks,—the Uranus brethren pursue the Kaiser as often as he visits Vienna, with brazen effrontery, and some of their letters, which have fallen into the hands of my mistress, would afford good grounds for prosecutions for *lèse majesté*,—the majesty of manhood. I remember one particularly outrageous note, which was written on a perfumed letter-head, bearing the inscription: "*Wiener Club der Vernünftigen*" (Vienna Club of the Reasonable). It arrived a few days after the Kaiser's return, and, the envelope proclaiming a private character, was opened by His Majesty in person. "*Mon bon frère,*" commenced the missive in quite royal fashion, "we have searched the records of history in order to further substantiate the belief that, like your great ancestor and his immortal friend, Voltaire, you are one of us. The elective affinity, nay, the consanguinity itself, is not difficult to establish. Your

Majesty's great-grandmother, Queen Louise's[1] lover, Alexander, the Apollo-like Czar of all the Russias, was a '*Grec*' of the type of Plato and of Achilles and Patroclus. There can be no doubt that the passion for homosexual love engendered in the Hohenzollerns by Frederick the Great and lost in the petticoat reign of his successors, was re-inoculated into Your Majesty's race by Alexander. If Your Majesty doubts that Alexander was one of us, read the memoirs of Countess Anna Potocka," etc.

Quite naturally, this letter upset the Kaiser, and in his first rage he vowed never again to visit the *Hofburg*, but changed his mind when, during his presence in Rome, the Club "*degli ignoranti*" sent him similar insinuating missives, and when, to cap the climax, the Brussels "*Réunion philanthropique*," a branch of the Knights of the Rosary, offered to wait upon him *in corpore* while he was with the King of the Belgians in Ostende. Now he decided to throw himself upon the protection of the police; and the Berlin President, the late Baron von Richthofen, wrote to his colleagues in all the great capitals and cities, asking them to prevent the repetition of the annoyance to the Kaiser during later visits,—a demand which could not fail of success, as the societies are all more or less under surveillance.

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[1] That illicit relations existed between Alexander and Queen Louise has not been proven, though it is suggested by many circumstances. Napoleon insinuated that Alexander told him the Queen had granted him favors. In a memorial of Napoleon's journey to St. Helena, published several years ago, the exiled Emperor told how he had inveigled Frederick William III, during the meeting of the three monarchs at Tilsit, to pay him a ceremonious visit in order to give Alexander a chance to enjoy the embrace of Queen Louise. The title of "*Grec*," which has a double meaning in French, was given to Alexander by Napoleon.

When through with these negotiations, Baron Richthofen arrived at the conclusion that the saying *en vogue* at the Court of Henry III of France (Henry was one of the most noted "*Grecs*"): "*En España, los caballeros; en Francia et Austria, los grandes; en Alemania, pocos; en Italia, todos,*"[1] holds good to this day.

There is, as I said, not the slightest connecting-link in the make-up of William's character to justify the insolent suggestions of these degenerates. The Kaiser, though he has his peculiar likes, admires woman's beauty as much as any man; and if the Berlin Court of to-day is as notorious for the ugliness of its female members as that of the old Emperor and Empress was for *beautés*, it is not William's fault.

The Empress, my august mistress, is jealousy personified, and not only surrounds herself with a chain of *passé* and sour dames, but treats women of the aristocracy who possess attractions that might possibly captivate the Kaiser, with such exquisite and cunning ill-grace that they are obliged to keep away from Court as often as etiquette permits. With the exception of Countess Bassewitz, who is young and pretty of face, all Her Majesty's ladies belong to the old guard, and if, perchance, a good-looking girl is engaged for the higher duties of the household where the Emperor is liable to meet her, Auguste Victoria soon finds ways and means to rid the palace of that ray of sunshine. Either the young person is driven to hand in her resignation by those arts which jealous women understand so well, or is transferred to some distant residence which the imperial master never visits.

Sinfully fair chambermaids even are subject to that rule, and if I feared not to ruin their chances in life, I could

[1] In Spain, the Knights are devoted to this vice; in France and Austria, the aristocrats; in Germany, a few; in Italy, everybody is.

give quite a long list of lowly members of our *ménage* who were sent away from Berlin merely because Her Majesty thought their nose too finely modelled, their bust too prominent, or their hair too luxurious. All the unhappy traits Thackeray ascribes to Queen Charlotte are brought into play when Auguste Victoria's jealousy is aroused. She becomes invincible in matters of etiquette, and angry with her people who, in the service, suffer ill-health. A pin out of place, or a moment's absence from duty, throws her into a towering passion on such occasions. She is unkind, unjust, and not above excusing her hatred of poor sinners, such as we all are, by religious scruples. At all times the Kaiserin is a much more gracious mistress to homely dependents of her own sex than to good-looking ones; and when they are old, into the bargain, she can be really delightful to them.

"Why, this is not the Court my father and uncles have been telling me about," said the present Emperor of Russia, then Czarovitch, to the Duke of Schleswig, when he visited Berlin a year before Czar Alexander's death. "At home they talked quite enthusiastically of beauties that basked in the shadow of the Prussian throne, and whom the old Queen and Princesses were generous enough to countenance."

"Yes, yes," laughed His Highness, "that is one of 'Dona's' weak points. She will not suffer a handsome face and figure within ten miles of her house. It has always been a wonder to me why she keeps Bassewitz."

"Perhaps to prove the rule," suggested Nicholas, and Günther, who is not endowed with a surplus of sense, thought the remark brilliant enough to circulate it among all his intimates.

Like Nicholas, many other visitors deplore the new state of things, and rave rapturously of old times when Emperor

William the First's hospitable board and ball-room were graced by such perfect belles as the Countesses Schimmelmann and Münster, while his sister-in-law, the Princess Charles, successively engaged as maids of honor the fairest of the fair the Fatherland produced, chief among them the late Countess Seydwietz, "Fifi," as she was affectionately called. Her Ladyship was the idol of the great world, and as fond of the King and his fine cavaliers as they were of her. Ah, the sighing and cursing that went on, when at last she married her dashing *chef d'escadron* of the *Garde du Corps*, Count Dönhoff! Beautiful Rose von der Schulenburg, the Countess Bünau, she of the far-famed Titian locks, and Mira, Countess von Schlippenbach, young, lovely, and an adept in every ladies' sport, are not yet forgotten, either. Their successors in official positions—Fräulein von Gersdorff and the Countess Keller, Her Majesty's favorite maids of honor—are notable only for their plainness, and both are several years older than Auguste Victoria. When their younger colleague, Countess von der Schulenburg, resigned some two years ago to marry Count Pückler, the grand-mistress and her venerable adjutants tried their best to give the place to another old maid, or "remote virgin," as the Berliner says; but His Majesty put his foot down, and declared that he had enough "old iron" in the house, and that the new-comer must be young and charming. So Marie Bassewitz was selected for the post. She possesses youth and good looks, as the Kaiser demanded, but the Empress is not jealous of her: Her Ladyship's hands are far from beautiful.

At the time of the Medical Congress in Berlin, in 1891, Her Majesty granted an audience to a number of the visiting *Æsculaps*, and a chamberlain of the Empress Frederick, sitting near them at the *table-d'hôte* in the Hotel de Rome the same afternoon, witnessed the following conversation:

The Kaiser and Count von Moltke Studying a Military Map

"Have you ever seen a richer apparelled and homelier lot of women than the *entourage* of Her Majesty of Germany?" asked one of the gentlemen, a celebrated Moscow surgeon.

None of them had.

At last a little man with coal-black eyes and a scraggy, shoe-string moustache spoke up. "Yes," he said, in the choicest pigeon English,—"at the drawing-room of the Queen of Corea. They were dirtier, too." The speaker was a Japanese.

When this story came to His Majesty's ears, he hawked it about for many days at second breakfast, dinner and supper, in the adjutant's room, in the parlor and audience-chamber, pronouncing it the cleverest thing out,—under his breath, of course, for it was to be kept from the Empress.

This is a sample of the treatment the Kaiser metes out to his wife's ladies. He seems to take a fiendish delight in teasing the "old guard," and only occasionally has a good word to say to Countess Bassewitz. Fräulein von Gersdorff, who grows stouter as she grows older, often serves as a target for the Emperor's wit. So he insisted, at the decoration of the Christmas-trees in 1894, that the Gersdorff mount a step-ladder and fasten a *papier-maché* angel on top of the tree. Naturally, my fat friend did not care to expose herself—and her limbs, and offered many excuses with her profoundest courtesies, but the Kaiser cut her short with a brusque "I know you are bow-legged; let the *Kammerdiener* climb up."

On another occasion (it was before the advent of Countess Bassewitz) the Kaiserin said one evening when the Court was assembled in the *Tassen Zimmer* to kill the hours that intervened between after supper and bedtime with the usual dreary conversation: "I wonder why none of my ladies

marry. Perhaps they do not go out enough. What do you think, Willie?"

"Pshaw!" answered the Emperor, gruffly, "I think these ladies have all the freedom they want. Why cannot they get husbands? Ask the next best looking-glass."

These pleasantries were offered before the anonymous letter scandal had driven the few handsome or clever women belonging to Court society, though not to the Court, to other cities or to the country; that is, before Countess Hohenau, Madame von Kotze, Madame de Panafiel, and the Baroness von Leipziger had permanently retired. The quartet did not comprise the whole royal set, of course; Countess Marianne Dohna, Madame von Alvensleben, the Countesses Kanitz and Wedell, Baroness von Arnim and the Countess Nemes von Hidvèg, not forgetting a host of princely dames, distant relatives of the Hohenzollerns and Schleswigs, have both youth and beauty; but none of them ever belonged to the inner circle. They call and dance at Court, are dined and banqueted, some of the favored ones, especially the wives and daughters of high army officers, like Madame von Sick, *née* Countess Schlieben, Madame von Plüskow, and Mademoiselle von Albedyll, daughter of His Majesty's adjutant-general, ride to the hounds in the royal preserves occasionally; yet none of these ladies ever enjoyed the Kaiser's favor, none of them ever became William's "*Spezi*,"[1] as the Viennese say. Perhaps that term did not apply to Madame von Leipziger's actual relations to the Kaiser, either; but I know it from his own lips that he admired this charming though plain woman, and would have gladly given her a position at Court if Her Majesty had permitted it. Of the other "*Spezis*," Madame von Kotze was for

[1] This is an abbreviation of special, special friend, chum.

years the favorite, if I may use that word in its broadest sense, without asserting too much. William first took her up in the beginning of the eighties, when his marriage to Auguste Victoria "made him hungry for the society of a clever and audacious woman," as Count Herbert Bismarck once expressed himself.

"He has engaged a *Maréchale de Prusse* for his awkward better-half," continued His Excellency, with a sneering allusion to the bargain enacted between Du Barri and Madame *La Maréchale* de Mirepoix (who, for a consideration of a hundred thousand francs per annum, taught the gorgeous scarlet woman the ways of polite society), "and the Countess does it all for the love of Christ, or *pour le roi de Prusse*, which is the same thing.[1] Now he wants somebody to make him forget the *ennui* that reigns in his palace."

And Madame von Kotze, I should judge, was just the woman to do it.

To her, Auguste Victoria referred when she charged His Majesty with a weakness for Jewesses, though it goes without saying that Her Ladyship does not belong to the socially proscribed race. She only looks as if she did. And another thing,—there is something lacking in her maiden name. Not the "von," oh, dear, no! Without that, she would be nobody, "she would hardly be born at all." *On finirait donc par s'encanailler*,[2] if people of insufficient birth were received at Court. But being a von Treskow, she spells her name without the Olympian "c." In other words, she is a "false Treskow." The old feudal

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[1] Prince William asked his wife's aunt, the wife of General Count Waldersee, to chaperon his wife and initiate her into the world of society shortly after his marriage.

[2] "We should end by landing ourselves in the gutter,"—an expression *en vogue* among German uppertendom.

family spells its name von *Tresckow*. There are rumors that her papa exchanged the three letters "von" for three "ooo's" coupled with the single figure "5." I believe the late Duke of Coburg obliged him; but Queen Victoria's brother-in-law, the great peer-maker of the Fatherland, was, of course, unable to supply the missing letter "c," which reminds one of James the First's *bon-mot:* "I can make a lord, but not a gentleman."

"Do not let that worry you, my dear Leberecht," said the Princess of Meiningen to Madame von Kotze's husband, then her brother's friend and master of ceremonies; "your wife may be a real Treskow with the 'c' after all. Her grandfather, you see, may have been the natural son of one of the old lords, who gave him his name without the title."

"Does that ever happen?" asked Kotze, who is not noted for any brilliancy or quickness of perception.

"Yes, indeed," laughed Her Royal Highness,—"only the other day I read that when my ancestress, Princess Amalia, was Abbess of Quedlinburg, she owned a town named Pickelsheim, near Paderborn, whose two thousand inhabitants were all called Spiegel, Barons and Baronesses von Spiegel, and *Herren* and *Frauen* and boys and girls Spiegel, the first being the legitimate descendants of the noble lords residing in the manor-house, the other the offspring of left-hand alliances, or even less ceremonious intercourse. At Pickelsheim the sisters of full-blown Baronesses von Spiegel, whom birth entitled to canonships and similar benefits, served as dairy-maids in their father's stable, and in 1748 it was a grave question in that neighborhood whether the office of town-shepherd should be given to a broken-down *von* Spiegel or a sturdy Spiegel."

This information pleased poor, hare-brained Leberecht, but failed to reconcile Her Majesty and the rest of the

exclusive set as to Madame von Kotze's pedigree. They fought the "Hungarian pork-raiser's daughter," as some one had dubbed her, in the *salon*, the *ménage*, on the slippery parquet of the royal ball-room, wherever she showed her saucy, piquant face. Ah, that face! It was not broad and placid; her fine, white shoulders were not quite fleshy enough to suit the Teuton female critic. And she has black, curly hair, the Kaiser's favorite that was! That is almost a crime; for are not Her Majesty and her friends blondes, and is he himself not rather carroty, and therefore naturally inclined to dote on brunettes?

However, the royal lady's contemptuous treatment of the object of her jealousy, the scenes the Kaiserin made for William, and the pin-thrusts of coroneted envy were alike powerless to bring about a change in the relations between Madame von Kotze and the sovereign, though the battle raged for ten years or longer. His Majesty made it plain that he liked Madame von Kotze, and she was, consequently, a conspicuous figure at all entertainments, stately and of a semi-private nature. Being the wife of one of the high Court functionaries, the missing "c" in her maiden name was generously ignored, and the "pork-raiser's daughter" sat at the same table with crowned heads and the proud possessors of sixteen or thirty-two quarterings of nobility. More than once the Emperor himself took Her Ladyship into dinner, and at informal suppers, after musicales or similar excuses for organized *ennui*, His Majesty never failed to "command" Her Excellency to his table. On such occasions the Emperor and Empress invite their company by sending a page to the favored ones, Her Majesty selecting the men, and the Kaiser the ladies, who are most to their liking.

At the Court balls Her Ladyship was likewise much in evidence. Being rich in her own right, and having

increased her fortune enormously by marriage, madame ranks as one of the smartest dressers, and envy must grant that she has lovely shoulders and a superbly-chiselled bosom. She is a good talker, quick at repartee, and full of Gallic wit.

"Your Royal Highness's *inspecteuse des jambes* reports for duty." With these words, Madame von Kotze greeted Prince William at the beginning of the second carnival ball of 1886, as he stood conversing with some dowagers on the steps of the throne in the White Hall.

I should not believe it possible, had I not heard the words myself; still, I confess the jolly mockery of the woman's voice, the innocent look on her face took away much of the coarseness of the expression.

William had seemingly not been in the happiest of moods until then. At the approach of Madame von Kotze, his face lit up, and, taking the pretty woman's arm, he bowed with a little sneer before the elder ladies as he withdrew with his fair escort.

"*Les jambes ou la main gauche?*"[1] exclaimed one of the grand dames quite audibly as she followed the pair with her eyes. "Calm yourself, madame," I thought; "Prince William has nothing in common with his ancestor[2] who was forever rolling between the nuptial couch and the alcove, or kept these establishments side by side, snapping his fat fingers at those who talked of bigamy. He loves to

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[1] "Legs, or the left hand?" Morganatic marriages are called marriages by the left hand in Germany.

[2] Frederick William II of Prussia openly married Countess Doenhoff, and, after her, several other women during the life-time of his second queen, Frederika. The children of this marriage, which took place in 1791, were styled Counts and Countesses of Brandenburg. Queen Frederika lived until 1805, and was never divorced. Countess Doenhoff survived her twenty-nine years.

be amused, and cares, perhaps, not overmuch for his wife's feelings; but his sweet egotism, for one thing, will keep him out of morganatic troubles."

And so they strolled along, he in his gold-braided Hussar uniform, the fur-edged *attila* over his shoulder to hide his poor left hand; the woman, who set herself the task of amusing the King, walking briskly by his side in her radiant young beauty, laughing and gesticulating.

"An oriental face," said the Prince von Salm-Horstmar, and a dozen people seconded His Grace's remark. It was all over the brilliant hall, with its crystal chandeliers and purple and gold hangings, lit up by thousands of wax candles. "An oriental face,—but so was that of Cleopatra." The simile was far-fetched. Where was the Cæsar, and where was Antony, not to mention Cæsar Junior? The couple walked through all the rooms quite alone, for His Royal Highness had hinted to his adjutants that they were *de trop*. At supper, in the *Königinnen Zimmer*, I was seated at the table reserved for the Princess Imperial, who, however, had decided to go home at the last moment. Near-by was Prince William's table, at which Madame von Kotze presided, and where all the Princes and "bloods" present enjoyed the heir presumptive's hospitality.

How they laughed and joked! "Why don't you dance?" asked one of the cavaliers.

"Because it gives me palpitations."

And then somebody told the anecdote of Marie Antoinette, who, one evening, when waltzing at Petit Trianon with Count Dillon, the beautiful Dillon, as he was called, stood still and said: "You should feel my heart beat." That was just what His Lordship wanted to do, and so, tearing off his glove, he encircled the Queen's left bosom with his hand.

"Stop that!" called Louis XVI, who, as usual, was the most conspicuous wall-flower in the room. "You don't need to take Her Majesty's orders of that sort *verbatim*."

Of course everybody regretted not having been an Englishman a hundred and more years ago,—"an Englishman who dared treat a queen like a ballet-girl."

"Or a living picture," cried Duke Günther.

"Pst! not so loud," said Frau von Kotze, with a side glance to another part of the room, where Baroness von Reischach, *née* Princess Ratibor, was supping with the Countess of Hidvèg, both stars of many *tableaux vivants*.

"But your report, Madame *inspecteuse*," began the Prince of Ratibor, now dead, the same who turned housebreaker for the love of an Emperor's daughter, "we insist upon a report, and a minute one."

"Well," replied Madame von Kotze, with comic *grandezza*, "we were not overpleased with the new fashion, were we, Your Royal Highness?"

Prince William nodded. "Your Ladyship will proceed," he said; "do not keep these studious young men waiting."

"As intimated," continued the young woman, "we found the present mode of short dresses not very advantageous to our Christian purpose. When a girl dances in a long gown, she must necessarily raise her skirt, and, in doing so, often displays more of her hosiery than intended. This season dancers leave their skirts severely alone, and if a man should take hold of them, as he is obliged to do when long trains are worn, Baron von Richthofen would be called into requisition, I am afraid."

"Then you have seen nothing?"

"Not much in the line of calves," said the Prince.

"You talk like a butcher. In England no one looks for calves. A pretty ankle is the thing there." This from the Duke of Schleswig.

Madame von Kotze, perceiving that William was about to reply angrily, quickly added: "But His Royal Highness discovered some exquisitely-shaped hands among the *débutantes.*"

You may be sure Princess William learned all about this talk, and perhaps a little more than was actually spoken, but to no other purpose than to instil impotent rage in the unhappy mother's bosom and make her even more suspicious of and disagreeable to good-looking women in and out of the palace. One of the chief agitators against Madame von Kotze, and every other handsome face, for that matter, was the grand-mistress, Countess Brockdorff, who once betrayed her practices to the amusement of the whole Court. Shortly after we had moved from Potsdam to the Berlin Schloss in the winter of 1894, an informal note addressed by the Countess to Her Majesty fell into the hands of one of the House-marshals. It happened in this way: Her Majesty is in the habit of writing orders and complaints, intended for the officials, on small bits of paper which she tears from a block. Now, Her Excellency's note happened to be written on a similar sheet, and so it got mixed with the rest.

The note contained the names of persons who had handed in requests for audience. Last on the list was the name of Madame von Kotze, and opposite it the remark, three times underlined: "Refused." Then followed this sentence: "*Ende gut, Alles gut. Alleruntertänigst, gute Nacht.* (Signed) Theresa Brockdorff."[1]

Of course, this note, indicating exactly how the wind was blowing in the upper regions, had no sooner been read in the marshal's office than its contents were on

[1] "All's well that ends well. Good-night, from your most submissive Theresa Brockdorff."

everybody's lips. Most of the courtiers were honest enough to see the point of the attack (for, after all, the mixing up of papers was not wholly accidental); but the Schrader faction, that is, the friends of Master of Ceremony von Schrader, the same who was afterward shot and killed by von Kotze, would not have it so. They insisted that there was some mysterious connection between the refusal of audience and the anonymous letters.

CHAPTER XIV

It took the *camarilla* ten years to dislodge Madame von Kotze, a long space of time even for Germany, but it must be remembered that Her Ladyship was not the only favorite. There were more thorns pricking the imperial flesh, so that the efforts of Auguste Victoria's champions were necessarily divided. Charlotte, Countess von Hohenau, was second on the list of charmers who boasted of William's friendship without fear of compromising her position.

This young noblewoman, the daughter of a rich landowner, Herr von der Decken, became the Kaiser's *cousine*-german by her marriage to the son of his great uncle, Prince Albert of Prussia. Prince Albert's first wife was Marianne of the Netherlands, who brought him an enormous fortune, and whom he divorced in 1849 because of her intimacy with his riding-master. This latter was a brute, and Marianne never had a quiet moment during his life. After the divorce the unequal pair resided at Her Highness's castle, Kamentz, in Silesia, and the ex-hostler used to whip his royal mistress mercilessly, while she fed him on the fat of the land. When at last he succumbed to his unwonted diet, poor Marianne took another lease of life. She died in 1883, seventy-three years old.

Four years after his divorce, Prince Albert married Rosalie de Rauch, by whom he had two sons, William and Fritz, who were created Counts von Hohenau and became

respectable members of Berlin society. The elder, William, a major in the *Garde du Corps*, is now married to a daughter of the Duke d'Ujest, whereby he improved upon his relationship to the Kaiser by becoming cousin-german to Her Majesty too. However, by the grace of his wife's beauty, Fritz is the best known of the brothers, and his fortune, augumented by the von der Decken millions, is the amplest.

The Hohenaus, all of them, men and women, were much befriended by the old Emperor, and Count William came near inveigling Frederick III to revive in his favor the name and title borne by the morganatic wife of Frederick William III, the Countess Harrach. He would be Prince of Liegnitz to-day, had the late Emperor been able to sign the piece of parchment setting forth the creation during the last days of his illness. The present Kaiser never cared much for the "left-handed brood," as he called his cousins, with the pride of the "regularly born," but when he returned in October, 1892, from his hunting-trip to the Principality of Pless, all this was changed.

He had seen his "loveliest and most piquant of *cousines*," and was now convinced that Frederick the Great's *mot* was true, viz.: that a "dash of plebeian blood here and there improves a royal race."

"Of whom are you talking, pray?" asked the Empress, across the table, moving uncomfortably in her seat. "I did not know any of our set were invited."

"I had the pleasure of referring to Fritz Hohenau's wife."

"Oh, *that* woman. She is a gamekeeper's daughter, or something of that sort, is she not?"

The Emperor paid no attention to this sally. "Eulenburg," he addressed the grand-master, "I will go over the list of this season's guests with you presently." And from

that day on Countess Fritz had to be treated as *persona gratissima* by everybody in the royal service for two years to come.

This vivacious woman introduced her pleasing presence on every occasion when the Emperor personally or the Court played a part. She rode, hunted, and skated with us; she played tennis, and went coaching with His Majesty; she danced more gracefully than a respectable woman should at the gorgeous Court balls and at our stupid *thés dansants*. More often than not, Her Majesty returned from the riding-school, where she had gone for exercise, with red eyes. "*That* woman was there,—on a horse ten times more graceful than my own."

At state dinners the newly-found *cousine's* place was near enough to the royal arm-chair to throw old goldsticks into convulsions, and on lesser occasions William often conducted Her Ladyship to table, while his Queen yawned herself to death at the side of some crusty General or doltish relative. And how Charlotte's laughter rang out above the clatter of silver plate and the tinkling of bumpers! Wit, joy, enthusiasm, success, all crystallized in the tone of that voice, which the Emperor admired so much, and which Her Majesty likened to a chansonnette singer's. There were sycophants, with and without petticoats, who endorsed this latter notion,—a Queen can find people to believe with her in the quadrature of the circle,—but society generally continued its good opinion of Countess Hohenau in the face of calumnies of all sorts. Indeed, the clever woman was a favorite everywhere, and that with her youth and beauty she did not capture the Kaiser's eye before is really remarkable. Maybe he avoided her on account of the Hohenau-Empress-Frederick *entente cordiale*.

"His Majesty was the last to mount," says one of the blue-blooded participants of the *battue* in Pless. "We

were awaiting him in the court-yard, the horses being drawn up in a semicircle. My immediate neighbor, on one side, was the only lady in the company, Countess Fritz. She rode a long-legged hunter of a peculiar red color, straddling the animal *jambe de ça, jambe de là.* Her costume was appropriate to this sensational manœuvre: short Russian trousers reaching to the knee, a close-fitting cut-away velvet coat over a red vest and shirt, the latter partly hidden by a green tie, a jaunty *Calabreser* hat, and high patent-leather boots reaching a little over the knees in front, but cut out in the back, allowing the upper part of the silk-stockinged calf to be seen.

"As the Kaiser appeared in the door and stood still a moment to acknowledge our greetings, his eyes caught the parcel of sensual loveliness at my side. His face reddened with pleasure. Scarcely was he in the saddle when he cried out: 'Cousin Charlotte, a word with you.'

"I will bet my best pointer, Countess Fritz had expected the invitation," continued my informant, "but women *will* be actresses, you know. She played the surprised, the bewildered. Perfect horsewoman that she is, and capable of subduing the most stubborn beast by the pressure of her victorious thighs, the fox-mare got away with her—apparently. She reared, pawed the air, and seemed altogether unmanageable. Never saw anything better done at Renz's.[1]

"Suddenly a blow from Madame's gold-headed whip between the horse's ears, and with one leap the amazon was at His Majesty's side. 'Well done, *cousine*,' we heard His Majesty say. They galloped ahead, the rest of us following at a respectful distance, dog-trot pace."

Of course, Madame von Kotze was far from pleased at the advent of this new star. Rivalries were inevitable

[1] Then the foremost circus of Germany.

between the royal favorites, though His Majesty did nothing to provoke them, as far as I could observe. Possibly he treated the Countess with a little more freedom under his wife's eyes, utilizing the formerly disputed relationship as a pretence, but in all other respects Madame von Kotze's position was unshaken. She continued her visits at Court whenever the Kaiser was at home, and her beauty and style caused Her Majesty's ladies most exquisite heart-burnings. Indeed, Her Ladyship angered the dames more than ever because of the increasing luxury of her toilets, for, woman-like, she meant to surpass Countess Fritz by new creations of the milliner and tailor as well as by mental and physical gifts. In this endeavor to out-Eugenie Eugenie the tongue of the balance inclined now to this side, now to the other. I remember Countess Fritz cutting out Her Excellency at the *Schleppen Cour* (drawing-room) of 1893 by a superb gown of white gold brocade, edged with blue-fox; but things were evened up when Master of Ceremony von Kotze conducted Prince Albert's daughter to a *fauteuil* in the rear of the orchestra at the gala opera, performed a few weeks later, where she had to sit among army officers' wives and ordinary privy councillors.

My seat was opposite the royal box on that occasion, and if I live a hundred years I shall not forget the smile of satisfaction that overspread Auguste Victoria's countenance as she perceived her cousin in semi-obscurity. The Kaiser himself had only a malicious grin for his uncomfortable favorite. However, next day we experienced one of those intermittent upheavals for which the reign of William II is notorious. This erratic monarch cannot get along without rows; in his ministries, in parliament, or at home, somewhere there are always axes to grind. William had enjoyed his *cousine's* discomfort in the theatre; he had thought it

funny "to set the two women by the ears" (the satisfaction with which Her Majesty viewed the spectacle was likewise not to be underestimated); but after Countess Fritz, in a private audience, sought twelve hours later, had unbosomed herself to His Majesty, all this was changed. The master of ceremony was ordered to explain the reason for the unheard-of breach of etiquette; and his excuse, that Her Ladyship had arrived too late to be ranged according to her rank, was assiduously published in the palace, in the *salons* and clubs. Then it was given out that His Majesty himself intended to rehabilitate Countess Fritz, and a banquet was forthwith held where Her Ladyship occupied the seat of honor on the Emperor's right, while Madame von Kotze was placed considerably lower down at the table. This was according to "all-highest orders," but, after all, it is not easy to triumph over a woman of Madame von Kotze's acumen. Her husband showed the roster at home, of course, and Her Ladyship acquiesced in the new order of things quite gracefully, it is said, but insisted upon being given a place where she could watch His Majesty and the Countess, and listen to the general run of their conversation. That this arrangement, which all thought natural enough at the time, was afterward turned into an argument for Herr von Kotze's incrimination, will be narrated in a later chapter.

While these rivals for royal favors were disporting their anger and jealousies under Her Majesty's nose, so to speak, William basked in the smiles of a very elegant lady quite unknown to the Court, which affects to know everything. She was Madame, the Countess de Panafiel, wife of the Portuguese Secretary of Legation in Berlin, who is a grandee in his own country, but did not amount to much in Kaiserin Augusta Strasse.

We of the royal service were favored with glimpses of Madame de Panafiel's great beauty only at rare intervals,

when state occasions or other festivities necessitated her attendance at Court. Oftener she was seen at the opera, languorously reclining in her gilded arm-chair over which she had thrown her mantle of ermine,—a queenly woman, queenly of the style exemplified by the young Empress of Russia and Queen Marguerite, for, with these two exceptions, all the women on the thrones of Europe are either homely, coarse, *passé*, or too old to be considered.

Madame de Panafiel is not so tall as the Empress, but possesses in the highest degree that charm of figure which constituted Auguste Victoria's only claim to beauty in the past,—a neck and shoulders that seemed modelled by an artist's hand to support the burden of crown jewels. Add to this splendid endowment lustrous black eyes and arched brows, a fine Greek face, a noble carriage, arms like those the Venus of Milo lost, and the most aristocratic of hands, and you have a faint counterfeit of this grand dame, who, besides, was famous for her red blonde hair.

The relations between Madame de Panafiel and the Kaiser lasted from the beginning of 1890 till the fatal summer of 1894, when her husband was suddenly recalled to Lisbon. There was no one more surprised at this than the Emperor, who had already lost Madame von Kotze, and even before that he had been obliged to sever the ties which bound him to Countess Fritz. We were at the Neues Palais when the news reached my mistress. "I wonder what the Kaiser will say to this? Send out to ask whether he is in the *Vortragszimmer*," she remarked, unconcernedly, though the red blood mounted to her cheeks.

Unhappy Majesty, thou wert cheated out of a jealous woman's pleasure to rejoice in a hated rival's downfall, to feast thine eyes on a straying husband's disappointment, when he finds himself outgeneralled (by his little wife, perhaps)! On receiving a telephone message of Panafiel's

recall, the Emperor had hastened to Berlin to inquire into the meaning of the act. The Marquis de Panafiel, Portuguese Ambassador and cousin of the secretary, could give him no satisfaction. Beyond the simple notification by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, he had received no information from his capital. However, before nightfall a report that Her Majesty was at the bottom of the affair spread in the palace. Auguste Victoria, it was said, had stated her grievance to the Queen of Italy, and the latter, a truly sympathetic woman, had promised relief; a letter to that effect, from Her Italian Majesty, had been seen by some one in the Kaiserin's confidence. Through King Umberto, the Empress's wish had finally been communicated to Queen Maria Pia, who caused her son to name Count Panafiel's successor.

Madame von Leipziger, the wife of the former Court cotillion leader, retained the royal favor a little longer than the ladies named; but she is homely,—a Madame de Stäel, on a small, a very tiny scale, rather than a Ninon de l'Enclos. Short, with irregular features and a bad complexion, this woman gained her ascendency over William by means similar to those employed by Talleyrand to secure a reputation as a wit and inventor of *bonmots*. As the ex-bishop of Autun was never long without his "breviary," the "*Improvisateur français*," a many-volumed collection of anecdotes and smart sayings, so was Madame von Leipziger, while at Court, forever brooding over old and new volumes of magazines, devoted to charades, puzzles, and riddles. She made His Majesty's acquaintance at an early age, when he was a student at Bonn, her birthplace, and knew and appreciated his passion for those mental gymnastics that are liable to give conversation a sheen of *esprit*. The Kaiser, you know, wants to do uncommon things all the time, and where his lion's skin fails to

reach, he is content to piece it out with the fox's; in other words, when he finds it impossible to startle his friends and acquaintances by grand schemes, by criticisms of this, or that, or the other thing, by compositions in verse, or prose, or of a musical character, he likes to give proofs of his ever-ready alertness by proposing riddles or charades, which the person who happens to be on the rack must assume to be unable to solve, otherwise the imperial oracle would have to forego the very pleasure for which the comedy was arranged,—namely, to give the Emperor an opportunity to boast of his superior acumen. It seemed to be Madame von Leipziger's real object in life to foster this weakness. Ever since the kingly dignity has sprung into existence, there have been royal favorites, utilizing their sway in various manners. Some inspired their lords with good or evil ambitions, made them better or worse men, encouraged or discouraged their inclination for mercy or cruelty, for art, the sciences, or literature. Frau von Leipziger was probably the first to abet a master's disposition to drive his subjects to despair by more or less senseless riddles.

It cannot be my purpose to weary the reader by picturing the gloom the puzzle-headed hydra at times cast over our Court. The reptile of mythology, we learned at school, had nine heads, "each of which, when cut off, shot up into two new ones." In similar style Her Ladyship and the Emperor used to launch forth new attacks upon our good nature as soon as we had disposed of one ambiguous proposition. But even though Madame von Leipziger's relations to her husband were of the most innocent character, Her Majesty disapproved of them. So the news, gazetted one fine day, that Herr von Leipziger had resigned from the army, surprised no one, and Princess Adolph of Lippe voiced general opinion at Court when

she said: "My sister-in-law would not have any woman under *fifty* amuse the Kaiser."

Thereafter the charade-fiend went to live in the country, and we have never been able to discover whether the Emperor's assertion that Madame von Leipziger is "one of the most intellectual women of the time" is true or not, for the Court knew her only in her detestable specialty.

This happened, as intimated, in the late summer of 1894, when Her Majesty's girdle was already hung with many scalps of *beautés*. The times change, and man changes with the times. The Kaiser, who once freely resorted to married men's tricks to keep his wife from interfering with his private plans, now abandoned, one after another, the women whose company he had so richly enjoyed.

"Off with her head,—so much for Hohenau," "for Kotze," "for Panafiel," "for Leipziger," and—"William is to die a good old man." It was certainly a most inspiring spectacle to see this husband and father return to the homely fold where petulancy waits upon dreary languor. "But will it last?" everybody kept asking of everybody else. And everybody answered: "It seems impossible that it should." And those of the household who remembered the circumstances of the royal visit to Dessau, in December, 1889, can scarcely be blamed for being suspicious.

Dessau has but a tiny Court, consisting of a few "grand charges" and two or three dames, but the women there rejoice in a well-earned reputation for looseness, with which a corresponding amount of beauty goes hand in hand. Now, as soon as my mistress learned of the Kaiser's projected visit to that *duodez* Sodom, she set to work to procure an invitation for herself. This was easily arranged through the Princess Frederick Charles, sister of the Duke, but for quite a while His Majesty remained deaf to his wife's hints and even to direct requests to take her along. Finally,

when Auguste Victoria asked him in the presence of his aunt, he had to yield, and the Kaiserin ordered a number of fine dresses for the occasion. If the "*Dessauerinnen*" were really as handsome as her husband claimed, she meant to dazzle them, at least, by gorgeousness.

Two days before the imperial couple was to start, the Empress caught a slight cold, but nobody thought anything of it, though the Emperor remarked once or twice at table: "You had better look out, Dona, or maybe you cannot go." Her Majesty laughed at this, as we all did, knowing how much pleasure our mistress expected from the trip. There were most elaborate preparations: Her Majesty was to have a special car in the *salon*-train, and everything was to be done on the grandest scale. Countess Brockdorff and myself had been ordered to accompany the Kaiserin, and early on the morning of December 4 our trunks (two full truck-loads for a two-days' visit) were carted away to the depot. At ten o'clock we all partook of a hurried second breakfast in our travelling dresses, and that over, Her Excellency received orders to drive ahead to the station, to inspect for the last time the apartment on the train, while I went to fetch the children who were to say good-bye. Returning with the pretty youngsters, I found my mistress ready to go. She looked very well, indeed, in a fur cape and hat, matching a superb costume of green and silver.

While I was making these observations, Dr. Leuthold, the Kaiser's physician-general, entered.

"So you are to go along, Herr Doctor. I am glad of it," cried the Empress, holding out her hand.

"Well," replied the medical man, "I am a sort of necessary evil, as Your Majesty knows." In spite of this semi-jocular remark, Leuthold appeared embarrassed. "If it pleases Your Majesty," he continued, "let me see your

tongue. I will also have to examine your jugular glands once more."

"Nonsense," said the Empress, but at the same time she raised her veil and stuck out her tongue, at which the children laughed heartily. After a momentary examination, the physician pulled a long face. "Thank God," he said, "it is not yet too late."

"No, but it will be, if you do not hurry," interrupted the Crown Prince. "Papa will be here presently."

Dr. Leuthold took no notice of the child's joke. "I perceive indications of an inflamed throat that may bring on most serious complications," he resumed, gravely. "Your Majesty must go to bed at once, and must not leave the house for three days. In this way the worst may be forestalled."

"Then I am not going to Dessau?" gasped Auguste Victoria.

"I cannot permit it," answered Leuthold.

The Empress dropped into an arm-chair and began to cry.

"Is my wife ready?" It was the Emperor's voice outside. I advanced toward him. "Has Leuthold given an adverse decision?" he asked, before I had time to explain anything. His *Kammerdiener*, in black travelling livery, entered simultaneously to announce that the carriage was waiting.

"I am sorry," said the Emperor, stepping up to the Kaiserin and kissing her hand, "but you know one cannot be too careful of one's throat." Then he bade her and the children good-bye, and, turning once more at the door, cried: "I will send back your Brockdorff. She shall keep you company."

"It was all a deep-laid plot, a conspiracy," said Her Excellency afterward. "When I arrived at the train, His

Majesty's attendants exchanged side glances among each other which convinced me that something was up, and when the Kaiser came and told me to return home, I discovered that our trunks were already on the wagons that had brought the hand-baggage to the station. That shows they had never been freighted."

I remarked I did not believe His Majesty capable of such trickery.

"Bah!" growled the Countess, "you may take my word for it, my dear Eppinghoven, they did not *want* us in Dessau, where, I am told, corsages are worn as low as at the Court of King Jerome."

"Not *us*, perhaps, but Her Majesty ——"

The old Excellency shrugged her shoulders.

"And Leuthold?"

"Is a man, and in such affairs men stick to each other like glue. This amiable physician-general was given to understand that the Kaiser intended the trip for a stag party. Hence the examination at the hour of leaving, the awe-inspiring prophecies, and the disheartening verdict."

It is only proper to add that Her Excellency was as disappointed at the sudden set-back as Her Majesty, for, like most virtuous women of a certain age, she has a weakness for studying vice close at hand. To know exactly what iniquity is, one must not be too far from it. However, in this particular case, Countess Brockdorff's modest surmisals were well founded, as the gossip brought back from Anhalt by the courtiers and adjutants proved.

The Dessau incident happened five years previous to the great holocaust of favorites already alluded to, and at a time when my mistress was almost continuously in a sore state of agitation lest she should lose her husband's love. Sometimes she chased after him for days, following His Restlessness to Berlin, or to various hunting-boxes in the neighborhood,

and we ladies had to be prepared to spend our nights on the cars, or in the half-finished chambers of the Schloss, wet with paint and smelling of work-people.

When the Empress said: "I will give audiences in Berlin to-morrow," it probably meant that she had learned of His Majesty's resolve to leave her bed and board for a while and enjoy himself after his own fashion. But the reception accorded to our mistress, after we had caught up with the imperial runaway, was often far from pleasant. When surprised in Berlin, the Emperor sometimes bolted the conjugal couch as early as four or five o'clock in the morning to go on some impromptu hunting expedition, hasty preparations for which had been made overnight.

Auguste Victoria would then receive a few notables at ten in the forenoon, returning to the Neues Palais for lunch, and, perhaps, take another train for Berlin in the evening. Once the Kaiser vamosed from Hubertusstock, whither we had followed him unbidden. Going out hunting with his gentlemen at early morn, he sent, at supper-time, when Her Majesty was expecting him, a despatch saying that business of state had called him to the capital. All this plotting and counterplotting, the outcome of jealousy on general principles, as a clever woman once said, was ridiculous, wearisome, exhausting,—but tame. More interesting became the matter when a real woman, instead of an imaginary one, happened to be in the race, and such a reality was and is Letizia Bonaparte, Dowager Duchess of Aosta, the daughter of the late Plon-Plon, and her father's true child.

Poor Auguste Victoria! if she could have anticipated the sorry consequences of her good-natured decision to lodge the ex-King of Spain and his blooming young niece-wife in the *Fürsten Wohnung* when they came to Berlin, in November, 1889!

The *Fürsten Wohnung*, or Royal Suite, it should be explained, is on the same floors and in the same wing of the Schloss as their Majesties' own private rooms are. The occupants of both apartments are therefore much thrown together,—in fact, they cannot help being in each other's company at all times of the day. William had so impressed his wife with the imperativeness of strengthening his relations with King Umberto, that Her Majesty could scarcely do enough for her new friends. So she gave them the apartment reserved for the most intimate female relatives, the one which even Prince Henry, the Kaiser's brother, has never yet been allowed to occupy.

Since then the Kaiserin has said a hundred times: "If I had possessed but an ounce of prognostication, I would have gone to Potsdam and made them live in the *Stadt-Schloss*."[1]

At the time of this royal visit, the Duchess of Aosta was twenty-two years old, Her Majesty was thirty-one, the Duke forty-four, and the Emperor thirty years;—these figures tell the whole story. Letitia would not have been the daughter of that "carnal free-trader"—the name Lord Palmerston gave to Plon-Plon—had she not preferred the imperial blonde of thirty to her swarthy husband, who was twice her age. And under the influence of his seductive young guest, William remembered all of a sudden that his wife is older than himself.

How far in their love-making these reflections led Emperor and Duchess, I cannot say; I am writing of things I have *seen*, and conjectures are odious where a woman is concerned; but to complete my story it is necessary to add that their Royal Highnesses left somewhat abruptly, ten hours before the stipulated time, and that the Duchess

[1] Two miles from the Neues Palais.

(Amadeo died in the following January) never obtained another invitation to our Court.

True, she again visited Berlin in the beginning of April, 1893, but then the White Lady had no occasion to sweep the *Fürstentreppe* (royal staircase) which connects the living and bed rooms of their Majesties' suite and the *Fürsten Wohnung*.[1] Her Imperial Highness travelled *incognito*, which was the best thing she could do, considering that Auguste Victoria had refused to receive her. Besides, she came as a petitioner. The Kaiser was to intervene on her behalf with King Umberto, who had cut off her allowance and had refused to invite her to his silver wedding because of her alleged *liaisons* with half a dozen officers of the Turin garrison.

Letitia and William met. "Madonna, your every wish is a command," and forthwith a cipher despatch to the King of Italy, couched in the most amiable terms, issued from the German foreign office. It is further claimed that the lovers promised themselves no end of a good time two weeks hence, in Rome; but the same day the Empress got wind of the arrangement by one of those infernal anonymous communications. And in this case the strictly moral Piedmontese, who afterward obliged her again in suppressing Countess Panafiel, was really delighted to do Her Majesty's bidding, as he told her in person during her stay at the Quirinal. To William he telegraphed that he was not at liberty to serve him, the Aosta business being a family affair in which Her Imperial Highness's mother, Princess Clotilde, had the initiative. At the same hour, His Majesty

[1] According to the Margravine of Baireuth, this historic spectre served to frighten away people from a certain corridor, which a General had to pass when he desired to pay his nocturnal respects to a certain maid of honor.

ordered his Berlin Ambassador to conduct the Duchess to St. Moritz.

That closed the "*Roman*" of William and the Aosta, closed it the more effectually, as the Kaiser, after his return from Italy, began to pay attentions to Madame Herbette,—a circumstance mentioned at length in the fourth chapter; but though there was another daughter of La Belle France in the race, Her Majesty has never been able to overcome her violent aversion to *that* French woman: Letitia, "the Bonaparte with the alleged incomparable arms and hands," as she is wont to call her in conversation with the confidante of all her jealous troubles, Countess Brockdorff. My mistress cannot see a woman on a bicycle without being reminded of the Duchess's Turin escapade (of July, 1894), in which a wheel, tights, a bifurcated skirt, and a few baskets of champagne played the principal parts, and in the same way the picture of a female with uncovered arms, whether it represents an actress or a goddess, is liable to make her morose, for, as mentioned in the description of the Kaiser's study, a portrait of the hated Princess exhibiting her arms and hands to perfection is always on his desk.

With this latter arrangement, that, by the way, extends to His Majesty's special train and yacht, Auguste Victoria dare not interfere ("Do not charge my brother with *amour azoophilique*, whatever you do," said Princess Charlotte to her, when the matter was discussed *en petit cercle*), but her morbid sensitiveness leads her to attempt, at least, an occasional curtailment of William's picture-worship. Every time the Court goes to the Schloss or some other castle for a few days the Emperor wants his private gallery, consisting of framed and unframed photographs, moved and set up for the time being in the study he temporarily occupies. This, then, is Her Majesty's opportunity. She always selects the pictures that shall be packed and orders

the mistress of the household to take no others. That Letitia's effigy is never taken along on these trips hardly needs special mention, and that its absence from the imperial *secrétaire* is a source of grim satisfaction to Her Majesty is quite self-evident, but woe to the poor housekeeper when the Emperor observes the omission.

As the visit of the King of Roumania was expected on October 25, 1891, the *Hof* went to the Schloss a few days before. Now it happened that Madame von Larisch, after repeatedly suffering the Emperor's displeasure on account of the absence of certain photographs, had decorated the master's Berlin writing-table exactly as it was in Potsdam: with pictures of royal women and girls in all sorts of dress and courtly undress, chief among them a very life-like portrait of the Aosta which, indeed, assisted imagination to an almost flagitious extent. To see this sinful pasteboard and confiscate it was a matter of impulse with the Empress when she inspected the room; but as, at the same moment, Court-marshal von Liebenau was announced to make his report, what was Her Majesty to do? The portrait was too big to slip within the folds of her dress, and to hold it in her hand during the inevitable half-hour's lecture would have been awkward. So she had to put the picture back in its place with the galling knowledge that Liebenau, as well as her own *Kammerdiener*, had observed her jealous action.

The Kaiserin had a similar mortifying experience in April, 1893, when the Duchess of Aosta was in Berlin. On a certain morning, the Kaiser having suddenly left to drive into the city,—"probably to a rendezvous with *that* woman,"—Her Majesty went to look for possible incriminating letters on William's desk, and as she was bending over a pile of correspondence, the Master of the Wardrobe. Herr Fellbach, entered to remove the Kaiser's

fatigue-jacket. When discovered, Her Majesty drew herself up and asked the man angrily what he meant by playing the spy on her, thereby letting the cat out of the bag. Quite naturally the *Garderobier* defended himself, and, receiving more abuse for his trouble, went to his superiors for justification and counsel. So the story spread all over the Schloss, but as an offset Her Majesty complained to the Kaiser, and William treated his old servant with unusual severity for quite a while.

Nowadays His Majesty has become a specialist as far as women are concerned. He has not done entirely with Venus Vulvivaga, or, to speak more to the point, Venus Vulgaris, but most of his latter-day amours are on the order which one of Napoleon's biographers characterizes in this succession of exclamations:

"Emperor: 'Send for Mademoiselle So-and-So!'

"(Half an hour later). 'Bid her wait.'

"'Order her to disrobe!'

"'Tell her to go to the devil!'"

The veiled lady who steals into the Kaiser's cabinet, his private train or yacht, is a living, breathing reality; but these seekers of profitable dishonor scarcely count, as they do not enter into the inner life of the man and are generally dismissed without favors and with mighty small reward. Fifty years ago, Karl of Prussia's and Louis Napoleon's meanness to their mistresses was a subject of comment at all courts; in Berlin harlotdom, Karl was known under the sobriquet of *Thaler-Prinz*, because three marks was as high as he would go in the way of pecuniary reward, and even as Emperor Louis Napoleon seldom spent more than four hundred francs on a woman (when, in 1855, during the visit of Victor Emmanuel, he bought a ballet-girl for His Sardinian Majesty for five thousand francs, Paris thought he had taken leave of his senses, according to the Comtesse

Damrémont), but William II is hardly ever more liberal than the Man of Destiny was on ordinary occasions. Those stories of a king's ransom that "he ties in diamonds 'round his mistress's white neck" are inventions, and not particularly original ones, either. Though indulging in the greatest extravagances where his own pleasure is concerned, the sentiment of self that rules his every act probably persuades him that *ces dames* ought to consider the honor of having been intimate with an Imperial Majesty of his calibre as an offset against disappointments of a financial nature. Speaking of diamonds, the Duke of Schleswig showed me a specimen bracelet of the sort the Emperor uses for an *ouistiti* when he turns off a mistress. A pretty Potsdam girl had lent it to him in a burst of confidence. It was a gold snake bracelet, elaborately chased, with eyes of sapphires, and six or seven circles.

"Not worth much, but of good workmanship," said the Prince; "see, it can be drawn out and spread from wrist to elbow, or over the upper part of the arm."

"I should not think that would look particularly beautiful."

"Perhaps not. It is not intended for beauty, either." The Duke laughed. I did not understand him then. Today the reason of His Majesty's predilections for snake bracelets is no longer a secret.

That the Kaiser's disposition, or his manners, have improved under the influence of the new order of things cannot, in truth, be said. His humor vacillates between sullenness and indifference when he is at home, and though his nights belong to Her Majesty, his behavior very frequently belies his assertion that he regards Auguste Victoria as *sa femme et sa maitresse* at the same time. And how could it be otherwise? If a man spends his time almost entirely in the society of male friends, soldiers,

horses, and dogs, he can hardly be expected to shine in the *salon.*

Indeed, the society circles which the Emperor honors by occasional visits complain that the tone of his conversation frequently smacks of the stable, of "*Stallduft,*" as the German says. In conversation with Countess Elly von Eulenburg at the Liebenberg hunt dinner in the winter of 1896, for instance, the Kaiser insinuated, on an innocent remark dropped by Her Ladyship, a *double entendre* which I should blush to repeat to my mistress, if I were a man. And to make it worse, His Majesty insisted upon reiterating the offensive interpretation over and over again to the utmost chagrin not only of Countess Elly and of the other ladies present, but to the disgust of the men as well. And that happened in the house of his best friend, Count Philli.

The only handsome woman the anonymous letters have not frightened from Court is the Countess Sophie Schlitz de Görtz, a beautiful Brazilian, daughter of the Comte de Villeneuve. She was born nearly forty years ago on an estate near Paris while her father was on a diplomatic mission in Europe. I have already recorded the Kaiser's opinion of Her Ladyship: "So beautiful a woman can hardly be expected to have sense too." During her annual visits at Court, he treats her with cold courtesy, and is so little inclined to grant her a friend's privileges, that on one occasion she was forbidden the royal table for three days,—that is, until her Court dresses, lost in a railway smash-up, had been replaced. Despite the Empress's entreaties, His Majesty would not hear of the least deviation from etiquette in favor of the unlucky dame.

Madame von Scholl, wife of the imperial adjutant-general, on the other hand, is on very familiar terms with William; we might call her a second Madame von Leipziger, but she is jollier and better looking, too, though

small of stature, fat, and over forty. Instead of wearying her friends with riddles, this amiable woman amuses the Kaiser and the rest of us by her exquisite *drôlerie* and a rare good will to please,—talents that go far toward shortening our long hours of dilatory existence.

Born in Southern Germany, Madame *la Générale* is not hampered by that punctiliousness and the conventional scruples which make the Prussian lady of quality so detestable; though often doing things calculated to drive these staid personages to desperation, scandalmongery itself finds in her conduct small cause for criticism. For the most scandalous thing she ever did was stamped with the all-highest approval, and as she promised the Empress never to do it again, what harm can there be in this most innocent of royal favorites?

The scene of Madame von Scholl's assault upon the proprieties was a lonely natural elevation in the neighborhood of the Havel lakes, whither we had gone, one July day in 1894, on the royal yacht Alexandra to spend the afternoon,—their Majesties, the ladies and gentlemen of the service, and a number of guests. It was broiling hot, with a heat that induces sleepiness and ill-temper rather than hilarity. As we crept along toward the near-by forest, only an occasional word was spoken. The Kaiser looked as if he wished himself a hundred miles away, and the Empress was unhappy because her lord seemed displeased. Suddenly there arose the cry: "Where is Madame von Scholl? Did we leave her on the steamer?"—No. Some one had seen her at the landing-place.

While these questions went the rounds, we heard sharp whistling somewhere from above, and there, on the top of the sand-hill, stood madame, swinging her parasol, and turning as swiftly on one brown-stockinged foot as her ponderous weight permitted.

"The fat rascal!" cried the Emperor, "she must have sneaked off the pier and ascended the mountain from the other side." Then the Kaiser put his hands to his mouth and hallooed: "Stand still a second and give me a chance to fix my camera."

But at that moment the parasol and head and arms of the unhappy lady suddenly took a forward tumble, the rest of her body followed, and, twice overturning, she rolled down the incline like an avalanche streaked with brown and flesh tints and festooned with multicolored ribbons. Did the all-highest master and mistress and their excellencies and ladyships and colonelships and privy councillors and learned men and common every-day noblemen laugh? Oh, no! They just roared and bellowed and shouted and held their sides and danced about, and some of us shed tears at the hilarious spectacle; and when we had disentangled our portly friend from parts of her toilet intended to hang about her feet, that showed a tendency to envelop her head, she started in to enjoy the situation herself and we had to commence all over again to keep her company.

And we kept her company for the rest of the day and the whole evening, and it was altogether the pleasantest picnic the Prussian Court ever attended.

CHAPTER XV

In October, 1892, the Kaiser raised the interdict against *la maudite race de Hohenau ;* the all-highest revel in hunting-castle Grunewald, which led to the succession of horrible anonymous letters mentioned in these papers, took place in the following November, when my mistress, who had given life to Princess Victoria Louise in the middle of September, was not yet in a condition to ride to the hounds or participate in frolics. In vain had Auguste Victoria pleaded that the *soirée* be postponed until she were stronger and able to attend; "all the invitations were issued;" "Count Philli could not come at a later time, his duties not permitting him to leave Vienna after the date fixed;" besides, later on, he, the Emperor, "had to prepare for the formal opening of the Reichstag,"—these and more excuses of the kind silenced Her Majesty.

I had been one of the redcoats at the annual Hubertus hunt in Grunewald on November 3, and my report of the happenings, though strictly truthful, had pleased my mistress. The Countess Hohenau had been there, but rode her horse woman-fashion, and returned, like the other ladies, to Potsdam shortly after the boar was brought down.

"You are sure she did not go back to the chalet to participate in the *Jagd-Diner*, by another route?" inquired Her Majesty.

"I ordered my coachman to keep behind Her Ladyship's carriage, and, though she drove furiously, the command was strictly followed. I saw the Countess's phaeton turn into the court-yard of her villa, and up to eight o'clock to-night she did not leave the house. I have a man there now on watch, according to Your Majesty's orders."

My mistress had grown very red in the face.

"I see your zeal has led you too far," she said, coldly; "but as your friend, Madame von N——, lives near the Hohenaus, drive to her on some pretext and call off your *mouchard*."

Writhing under this undeserved rebuke,—the gratitude of kings,—I was about to say a word that would have tumbled to the ground the cardhouse of self-satisfied assurance, but conquered my passion. Such is life at Court! One has to do things one's womanhood condemns, and is insulted for carrying out the all-highest commands. I had told the truth about Countess Hohenau, but did not tell *all* I observed. If pique had got the better of me, if I had added to my description of the incidents a hint about the graceful courtesy with which Countess Fritz accepted, at the end of the chase, the customary green twig from His Majesty's hand, raised it to her lips, and buried it in her bosom, the whole complexion of social life in the capital for the next two or three years might have been changed, for that knowledge would have wrought the Empress up to such a pitch of passion that, by some decisive step, she would have made it impossible for William to continue in his intrigue. But the courtly usages in which I was brought up compelled me to resist the impulse of anger as well as that of outraged propriety. My mistress never learned the complete, unvarnished story of the Hubertus hunt. "Thou shalt not breathe anything disagreeable," reads the law governing a courtier's life,—"thou shalt not,

even if commanded to do so." Those anecdotes of kings and queens "who want to hear the truth and nothing but the truth" amuse me, for I know better.

At the Hubertus *Jagd-Diner* two hundred and twenty-five covers were laid; the company at the *soirée* two weeks later was much more limited,—five or six ladies and some twenty gentlemen,—among them the Duke of Schleswig, Prince George Radziwill, the Eulenburgs, Philip and Augustus; Generals von Hahnke, von Plessen, and von Scholl, Adjutant von Huelsen, and the Masters of Ceremony, Herr von Kotze and Baron Schrader. Our rubicund friend, Madame von Scholl, did the honors. There were, besides her and Countess Fritz, several friends of Duke Günther, who had not been met in society before. All I know about them is that they responded to the names of French marquises, and wore an astonishing number of lace petticoats.

"Philli never sang better, and Huelsen fairly outdid himself in his capacity as Court jester; those French dames, too, danced enchantingly enough on a marble-top table," says one of the guests; "but His Majesty, though applauding his friends' efforts, seemed absent-minded. During the whole of the evening he sat at the side of Countess Fritz, who was arrayed in a coquettish demi-toilet of white and purple velvet, with barely an excuse for a waist. One of her superb arms, ungloved if you please, leaned upon the Kaiser's *fauteuil*, and His Majesty fondled her hands.

"Toward midnight, Kotze, good-natured fool that he is (if it meant death to him he would still be the best person in the world to intrust with a commission concerning the King's pleasure), Kotze, I said, proposed that all go spook-hunting. '*Mon Dieu!*' cried the French women, 'is there a White Lady about this castle, too?'" And then Duke Günther told the story of the beautiful cannon-founder's wife, whom Margrave Joachim's Princess caused

to be immured on a staircase leading from her husband's room in the first story to the cellar. The cruel deed is said to have occurred about 1545, and the walled-up entrance to the staircase can still be seen. There are even many who think they can hear the poor, starved wench moaning in her centuries' old burial-place. To investigate this latter report, Kotze proposed that we adjourn to the Joachim wing. We did so with many affectations of chicken-heartedness, and when we returned and counted noses, as Günther suggested, there were two missing. His Majesty, you must know, had a sleigh ready all evening, the horses being changed hourly, and as soon as the company left the parlors, the Kaiser and Countess Fritz jumped into this vehicle, and, outriders with torches having been sent ahead, drove on toward Potsdam, Charlotte handling the ribbons. Grand-master Eulenburg was, of course, supposed to know nothing of this, but, being responsible for the Kaiser's person, he had arranged for a second sleigh, with the fastest team from the imperial stables, to follow the other at a moment's notice. Its occupants, an expert driver and a valet, were to keep behind the Kaiser without making their presence known.

"When we learned of these precautionary measures, a load came off our minds," concluded my friend, "and particularly the news that Her Ladyship was driving gave us relief, for everybody remembered the many narrow escapes His Majesty has had when acting as his own coachman."

It is further reported that toward five o'clock in the morning the driver and *Kammerdiener* returned, announcing that "His Majesty was safe." That was all the information given out on the subject. Many tried to learn more of the affair, but as the two men were promoted and removed to other parts of the country shortly afterward, the task proved hopeless.

It all happened on the 17th of the month. Next day, at noon, when the *Kammerdiener* brought in Her Majesty's mail, I noticed among the letters an envelope without initials or seal. This was most unusual. Ordinarily, letters of royalty, and of friends only, are submitted to my mistress in person, Baron Mirbach taking care of all others, as the majority are merely petitions. Examining the envelope still closer, I saw that the ceremonious address was written in Latin letters and in imitation of print. However, despite my misgivings, I had to lay the missive before the Empress. I put the mail on a silver tray and ordered the *Kammerlackai* to carry it into the library, where I preceded him to hand the letters to Her Majesty, who was sitting at her writing-table. By a strange coincidence, the Kaiserin espied the queer envelope at once; while I was giving her the letters with such remarks as "from Her Majesty, Queen Victoria;" "from Her Highness, the Duchess of Glücksburg;" "from Princess Feo;" "from ——" Auguste Victoria interrupted me. "What is in that queer envelope,—the last of the lot?" she inquired.

"I do not know. Some official business, I suppose, sent up by mistake."

"Give it to me, Countess."

And with that impulsiveness that sometimes urges us on to hasten to our doom, Her Majesty tore open the cover. I am not a prude, and have never failed to denounce the bigoted barbarian who cut the head off Correggio's Leda because that young lady looked "too pleased," substituting another of less exuberant expression,[1] but the picture

[1] This celebrated painting, done in 1530, hangs in the old Museum in Berlin. It was bought by Frederick the Great, during the Seven Years' War, from Prince Louis, son of the Regent of Orleans, who had spoiled the masterpiece, as intimated.

that fell from the envelope was so grossly indecent that I hesitate to even hint at the subject. It represented a scene in the St. Petersburg's ice palace of the eighteenth century, where the great Catherine compelled one of her discarded lovers to spend a night with his mistress. There were two figures, scantily draped in fur robes,—that of a female, bearing on her shoulders the photographed head of Countess Hohenau, and that of a man, exhibiting the Emperor's features.

Her Majesty scanned the abominable caricature with a horrified expression; then, bewildered, disgusted, helpless, she stared at me. I tried to take the picture and letter away from her. "Let me throw these things into the fire," I pleaded, glancing at the door through which the children, with their nurse, might enter at any moment. Instead of answering, Her Majesty got up and went into the anteroom. "*Herr* Lück," she said, in measured tones to the *Kammerdiener* on duty, "send for Countess Brockdorff. I must see Her Excellency at once. I am at home to no one else. The Princes must not come in until after their drive."

Returning, Auguste Victoria drew me down upon the sofa next to her. "Read me that letter," she said, "my eyes hurt." The poor lady was crying.

"Loloki[1] and Lotka on a moonlight night," began the epistle, which purported to tell the incidents of the night at Castle Grunewald, of William's (Loloki's) sleigh-ride with Charlotte (Lotka), Countess Hohenau, and of indescribable orgies in which the pair is supposed to have indulged afterward, in such utterly shameless and revolting language that, after reading aloud the first two lines, I refused to proceed. As, to my great relief, Countess

[1] "Loloki" is the name of a god of Northern mythology.

Brockdorff entered just then, I handed the pasquinade to her, but, unprepared as Her Excellency was, the introduction upset her. "I beg to be ex——"

"No excuses, please," said Her Majesty; "you will read this letter to the end. I must have it,—word for word."

A stubborn mien had overspread Her Majesty's face. Theresa Brockdorff saw that it would be useless to temporize. She did as she was told. Shades of Queen Bess and Du Barry, of the Duchess of Orleans and Lola Montez! has such language ever issued from a gentlewoman's lips? It was a dreadful ordeal, this reading of anonymous letter number one; and as we were in the midst of it the door opened and in walked the Emperor, deadly pale, holding in his hand an envelope of the same size and similarly inscribed as the one that brought Her Majesty's letter.

Countess Brockdorff and myself rose to withdraw, but the Kaiser stopped us. "Stay," he commanded, "my wife may need you after I have shown her this," and he threw the envelope on the table. Our mistress gave it a frightened look.

"The same as my own!" she gasped. You may imagine the explanations that followed: William's ravings, his vows of vengeance, Auguste Victoria's hysterics, her tears and noble declamations of unshakable trust in her beloved husband's fidelity. "And the best of it was," said the Princess of Meiningen, after things had settled down a bit, "my big brother totally escaped censure for his escapade. In the act of whitewashing him of the terrible accusations, launched forth in the Billingsgate of the medical college mess-room, the facts underlying the whole nefarious business were lost sight of."

So entirely were they forgotten that, indeed, the relations between the Emperor and Countess Hohenau and

his other favorites continued undisturbed for the next two years.

During the time from November, 1892, until the summer of 1894, a thousand and more letters of the character described were delivered at the homes of Berlin and Potsdam uppertendom; from Kaiser to clubman, from the first lady in the land to the last of Court society women, nobody, who was anybody, was spared.

The letters came through the ordinary mail, at all hours of the day and evening, postmarked now from this, now from that quarter of the capital or town, and always announcing their damnable character by the letter style adopted. The carrier that brought them, the lackey or maid receiving them from his hands, recognized the Cain's brand as readily as the quick-witted soubrette taking the note to her trembling mistress, or the Major-domo, the *Kammerherr*, or lady-in-waiting performing that disagreeable duty. As the sodden harlots of Whitechapel were at one time hunted by the merciless Jack and his jack-knife, so were the "noblest of the nation," her head and mistress, at the mercy of a nameless defamer, whose pestiferous arrows spared not the child in his mother's womb, and tore the mask of respectability from the face of graybeards whose youthful indiscretions belonged to the period of the fourth Frederick William.

One fine morning Fräulein von L—— was informed that her fiancée was a Lavallière, but not a liar, "and if you do not understand the phrase, look up its meaning in '*Les Contes Drolatiques*.'" Some racy adventures of the Dowager Princess von S——, that happened before I was born, were detailed in revolting terms to an innocent lad, her Grace's grandson, in his mail delivered at the War Academy, and on the eve of her confirmation, proofs were offered to the daughter of one of the highest functionaries in His

Majesty's service that she was an Austrian rather than a Prussian—on her father's side.

But these were merely side-thrusts, apparently delivered in an attempt to variegate the base of attack and spread consternation among those whose connection with the Court was comparatively remote. When persons of minor renown, like Prince and Princess George Radziwill, the functionaries of the imperial household, Ministers of State and others, who merely aspired to greatness, noblemen and women of the aristocracy trying "to get on" with their Majesties, *viveurs* and high-living dames, tuft-hunting martinets,—when a royal Prince or visiting sovereign received such letters, the missives usually related to affairs of past or momentary consequence; but in the case of the Kaiser and Kaiserin, of Count and Countess Fritz Hohenau, William Hohenau and wife, and Herr and Frau von Kotze, to whom two hundred and ninety of the thousand epistles were addressed, a spirit of persistent persecution was the main characteristic.

That first letter to Her Majesty was quickly followed by a second of the same style and despicable character. Whether the Emperor also had an epistolary visitation at the time, I do not know. Just then the palace was full of visitors, and political agitation kept His Majesty well occupied, so that his family and the household saw little of him except at meal-times, when his conversation was restricted to the Empress, his guests, and the military officials present. It was a tantalizing situation that we of the *entourage* had to face. Our master and mistress had been ambushed, dangerously attacked, and deeply wounded by a person, or persons, eating their bread either day by day or at stated occasions, by a somebody who slept under the same roof with them, or inhabited a palace belonging to the Crown. There could be no alternative. We all felt it; no one

dared dispute it. As Her Majesty said, the slanderer was "one of the official family, or, God save us! Beelzebub himself." Auguste Victoria is very religious, and, like Louis XI, inclines to blame His Satanic Majesty for a good many things.

On the morning of November 17, our little council of war—their Majesties, Countess Brockdorff, and myself—had decided to treat the affair with the most absolute secrecy, and had even formed a sort of quadruple alliance to hunt down the guilty wretch, the Emperor promising to make an example of him or her for all time. But no sooner had the latest *Vehme* dissolved, when its members were informed on all sides that the proposed star-chamber practices would be more than useless. It is easy enough to hide a genealogical tree which in summer affords no shade and in winter no opportunity for hanging one's self; but with a real one, possessing these qualifications to the highest degree, it is quite another matter. To drop metaphor, we learned at luncheon that the affair of the anonymous letters was all over the palace, half a dozen more of the kind received by William and Auguste Victoria having been delivered to members of the household in the course of the morning. At that time the mail-carrier was permitted to leave at the doors of each apartment in the palace the mail addressed to its occupants, so that no one knew what his neighbor got. Nowadays the chief porter intercepts the postman's budget in order to lay the material before His Majesty, if required. Tyrants have ever been opposed to privacy.

That this Russian style of treating privileged communications was introduced at our Court *after* Christmas, 1892, is worthy of consideration. If it had been *en vogue* on the day succeeding the Grunewald revel, the hue and cry raised by the recipients of the anonymous missives would have

been quite a matter of course: it is always judicious to take the bull by the horns. As things were, the voluntary surrender of semi-compromising letters spoke well for the abused parties,—Botho Eulenburg, *Fräulein* von Gersdorff, Count Pückler, Baron von Schrader, and General and Madame von Scholl. At least we, who knew them best, thought so.

The epistles mailed to *Fräulein* von Gersdorff and Frau von Scholl were exact copies of those sent to their Majesties; the gentlemen, too, we learned, had been treated to the same torrent of vile language, the letters being apparently printed from rubber type on some queer writing-machine. Neither did these persons escape the gift of the horrible caricature.

The luncheon had passed off in sullen silence, emphasized by occasional attempts at pleasantry that hardly evoked a response of any sort; but when we reassembled in the *Tassen Zimmer* the long-delayed explanations broke loose, the Empress comparing notes with her lady-in-waiting and Madame von Scholl, and the Emperor with his male co-sufferers, while the rest of us stood about discussing the situation. Suddenly the doors opened and Herr and Frau von Kotze entered.

The Kaiserin's master of ceremony wore his stereotyped smile and *chassé* about in his usual dandy-like fashion, bowing three times to both their Majesties, though their backs were turned on him, but Madame von Kotze had *rouge* on her cheeks and *noir* under her eyes. After some delay, Adjutant-General von Scholl announced the presence of the pair to William. "Ah, see there,—Leberecht and *gnädige Frau!*" cried the Kaiser; "to what lucky circumstance are we indebted for this unusual pleasure?" But before His Excellency could answer, a lackey entered with a card on a silver tray, which he held out to the grand-master.

Seeing the Kaiser's eyes fixed upon him, Eulenburg handed the pasteboard to His Majesty before he even looked at it himself. William jumped to his feet.

"You must see him at once," he exclaimed; "hear what he has to say, and then report to me!" And as the grand-master went out the Kaiser addressed Herr von Kotze and his adjutants: "Follow me to my study." Then he abruptly left the room.

The *carte de visite* which brought about this unceremonious withdrawal was Fritz Hohenau's, who had come to lay *his* anonymous letter before Count Eulenburg and thereby indirectly before His Majesty. When the little party arrived in the imperial writing-room, Herr von Kotze, innocent of what was going on, prepared to astonish everybody by a set speech, which he had memorized from his wife's notes on the way to Wildpark station. "May it please Your Majesty to permit ——," he began, glancing uneasily at the *entourage*.

"If you are also a victim, out with it, quick!" demanded the Kaiser.

"Poor Leberecht," said General von Scholl, in the evening, "was a picture to behold. At that moment his thoughts probably travelled thrice as fast as they had ever done before. With eyes bulging from his head, he stammered: "I a victim? A v-i-c-t-i-m?"

"*Her damit.*"[1] The Kaiser held out his hand with an imperious gesture.

Kotze fumbled nervously in his pocket. "I tremble to show the indecent rag;" "it's entirely unsuitable for Your Majesty's eyes;" "upon my honor, it's too rotten," he kept repeating in a half-remonstrating manner.

"*Her damit*, I *command* you." The Kaiser was now fairly beside himself with impatience.

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[1] "Give it to me."

At last the document and picture were deposited on the *secrétaire*, round which the Kaiser and his friends crowded. They were the same as the rest.

"The scoundrel must have struck off a dozen of these pasquils," suggested Count Botho, and William took up the train of thought at once. "Gentlemen," he said, "in hunting down the disgusting poltroon, no infinitesimal detail must be overlooked. When a great crime has been committed, it is Richthofen's practice to put all available men on the trail. So I expect you to go among your friends and find out who received copies of the anonymous communications and who not, the result to be reported to me in strict confidence. Likewise gather every bit of gossip relating to the matter, every opinion concerning it advanced in our own circles and among the people. With such men as you for aids," he concluded, "it would be strange, indeed, if I failed to run down the assailant of our homes."

So the titled *spirri* were let loose to rummage in all clubs, to investigate the mess-rooms, to spy around boudoirs. And the result? All the men and women invited to the *soirée* at Castle Grunewald had received fac-similes of the scurrilous letter, of which altogether from thirty-five to forty copies were distributed. Regarding the author, not a shadow of proof could be obtained.

For this reason the situation at Court grew more awkward day by day. Because no one was accused or accusable, all were suspected, and everybody was on the *qui vive* against everybody else, men as well as women, and the latter in particular. "*Cherchez la femme*" had been the cry of the amateur and professional sleuths from the beginning; for the first letter, as well as those that followed immediately afterward, and, indeed, the majority of anonymous missives received during the next two years, read

like products of a female mind consumed by jealousy and steeped in moral disease.

Like the unspeakable missives of the Vienna, Rome, and Brussels homo-sexual clubs, the letters breathed unrestrained desire for William's person, coupled with fiery hatred for any and every woman crossing his path. That of November 18 tore into shreds the wifely honor of Countess Hohenau; the succeeding one blamed Auguste Victoria for "conspiring to monopolize her husband."

"Do not flatter yourself that the wiles you employ to be forever youthful in the boudoir are your secret alone, imperial Messalina," began this precious document. "Your baths and massages, your tinctures and perfumes,—the meanest scullion in your palace knows their purpose: The Kaiser likes his Venus as she steps from the salubrious deep. But your servants also suspect that this is not the only requirement he imposes upon his charmer. That you hold him so well in hand as you do, and enchain him upon your couch one night out of six all the year round, proves your capability for adaptation," etc.

The above is but a mild and prudish excerpt from the many-paged hailstorm of invectives, and I cannot even suggest the significance of the concluding phrase, which, though in keeping with the whole character of the epistle, is too vile to print, teeming as it does with the sensuality of the brothel and showing in every line the writer's predilection for calling revolting things by the most nauseating terms.

"That's the cloven hoof of the succubus," said the Kaiser, after a consultation with Baron Richthofen; "the female devil always betrays her sex by astonishing profligacy, by an amount of obsceneness that is simply beyond man's imagination. Criminal history proves that conclusively."

The Royal Palace at Dresden

The pictures or illustrations enclosed in the letters constituted further evidence in support of the above theory. There were, aside from marginal drawings, Paris *pornographia* and Chinese color-prints of a certain kind bearing on their shoulders the photographed heads of the parties assailed, all being of a style and character that answer to the diseased imagination of a female rather than to the lower instincts of a man.

These hypothetical facts were, of course, widely discussed in the palace and in the realms of Court society, and the arguments based upon them went far toward persuading us that the guilty party would be run down. Germans, though always ready to believe in woman's low cunning, put little trust in her acumen.

Suddenly there occurred a change. The type-writer ceased working, and a man's hand took its place. Where nimble fingers, playing on a black-and-white key-board,—*the colors of Prussia!*—had heretofore dealt blows to woman's pride, her ambition, and all her better feelings, an acid pen at the command of a sarcastic and essentially virile brain now essayed to poniard the honor of husbands and wives.

His first victim was the Hereditary Prince of Meiningen, who received in the early part of 1893 an anonymous letter about the alleged misconduct of his wife and her lady-in-waiting, Frau von Berger. The missive contained facts and fancies that were news even to him (Bernhardt has never had too elevated an opinion of his better-half), and made His Highness furious; he began to talk of divorce and other extreme measures.

The same morning my mistress had sent me to the Thiergarten villa to quietly inform Princess Charlotte of the scurrilous note; but that precaution proved quite useless, for I found the august couple embroiled in an animated

discussion of the very facts which I was to communicate. As it turned out, the Empress's letter was merely a copy of Bernhardt's.

"Help me to persuade my wife that a divorce would be the best way to put a stop to these ever-repeated scandals," said the future Duke. "We can base it on dynastic considerations, you know, and I will promise my people that they shall never live under a Biesterfeld[1] if I get another chance."

"You *promise*," scoffed Her Royal Highness,—"you *promise*, and forget that our only daughter was born in 1879! Are you not afraid that *your* people may want to know what *you* have been doing these fourteen years?" With this, "Lottchen" threw herself into a corner of a sofa and indulged in wild laughter. Between the storming Prince and his boisterous wife I had difficulty in maintaining my composure and a show of the respect due them. At last Her Royal Highness sprang to her feet again. Her eyes were aflame and her lips trembled with scorn. "I know what you are reckoning on," she resumed, brushing away a pet dog; "you want to get a Holstein *à la* Auguste, and incidentally trust to the maxim of Louis XV: 'that a smart Princess never runs short of sons.' Very well, Bernhardt the Ruffian, I defy you to imitate Milan the Fat, and I will be a second Nathalie, take my word for it! In conclusion, let me remark that we Hohenzollern women have never been accused of barrenness." Saying this, the Emperor's sister bounced out of the *salon*, and I heard her tell the *Kammerdiener* on duty in the antechamber to order her "horse, her ladies, and her gentlemen."

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[1] The Hereditary Prince having no male heir, the Duchy will fall, after Bernhardt's death, to the sons of his brother Frederick, husband of Adelheid, *Gräfin* von Lippe-Biesterfeld.

Bernhardt threw up both hands. "There you are," he shouted,—"William II, spurs, pants, and the rest! May the devil try to tussle with her. I am off to the barracks."

"I beg Your Highness's pardon a thousand times; but what shall I tell my mistress?"

"Nothing," replied the Prince, gruffly, "or what you d—— please,—it is all the same to me." Let me add here, in parenthesis, that the future ruler of Meiningen is the most picturesque swearer in the German army.

The fact that a man had taken a hand in the game of defamation did not lessen the industry of the original blackguard, who, on the contrary, continued the social crusade with the old-time vigor. ("Social crusade" was the name the anonymous writer had adopted for the unheard-of campaign of home and heart breaking.) But while, at the period of which I am writing, Her Majesty and Countess Fritz were the most frequent targets of the assaults, Her Highness of Meiningen became a prominent object of attack immediately afterward, for a few months at least. Still later, Princess Charlotte having declared that she was not at all annoyed at the missives and pictures, which rather amused her, the scribbler "pinched with hunger for people's reputation," saved his postage and photographs for others. From Athens, whither the Meiningens travelled after Prince Bernhardt's temporary retirement from the army, Her Royal Highness sent some poems forwarded to her from Berlin, and which, she said in her note, "were too good to keep."

I have heard somebody say that the verses are not original. Maybe the rest of the effusions were filched as well. No one but a connoisseur of the worst kind of erotic literature would find it out. The author, or plagiarist, signed himself "Philoanus," a name that admits of no two meanings, and which was probably employed to

conceal the correspondent's sex. But despite this precaution it was clear that the filthy consignment emanated from a female offender; her ear-marks were apparent in every line of the manuscript, and various interpolated bits of vituperation, typical of the abandoned woman, tended to confirm this suspicion. Mind, I do not want to insinuate that the party alluded to is, or was, a *péripatéticienne*,[1] as they say in the Latin Quarter; there are moral castaways who never deviate from the rules of propriety save in their thoughts or with their pens, and who perhaps for that very reason are the more dangerous,—first, because, like the girl friends of Sappho, they run no physical risks, and, again, because of the contempt they have for the woman who does. Those poems dedicated to the Emperor's sister were veritable cess-pools of depraved taste and perverted sensuality, and I doubt if Henri Quatre would have permitted them to be printed "as truthful reports of existing evils," as he did Thomas's "*Isle des Hermaphrodites.*"

But, their grossness notwithstanding, Charlotte of Meiningen, as intimated, proved too fond of excitement to lose her temper over the anonymous attentions paid her, and, following this example, Countess Fritz likewise affected indifference to the attacks upon herself after getting over the first fright. That her husband had carried the case to the Kaiser was an obligation the officer owed to the Commander-in-Chief, and that, incidentally (be it said with all deference to an irreproachable character), Hohenau's sense of self-preservation urged him to the action, is not unlikely either. But seeing that the censor of Court morals kept an ear at all key-holes and an eye on our most intimate

[1] The Greek-French for promenaders, originally relating to the disciples of Aristotle, who delivered their lectures while walking about the pillar halls of the Athens lyceum.

doings, this assumed composure was bound to be noticed by the mysterious correspondent and provoke retaliation on his part.

For a year or so the Kaiser's and the Hohenaus' friends had been annoyed by allusions to the intimacy supposed to exist between Charlotte von der Decken and His Majesty; finally, without warning, the tone changed. "Loloki, thy happy hunting-grounds are being invaded by Baron von R——. What a situation! In thy speech to the Brandenburgers thou promised to smash those opposing thee; 'And if it comes to smashing, I will call upon you,' thou didst say to the carousing guard lieutenants. Now, a guard lieutenant is poaching upon the King's preserves. The smasher-in-chief knocked out by a masher-in-ordinary! And all for a silly harlot!"

His Majesty found this entertaining *billet-doux* in his mail one fine morning, and while he was still contemplating it, General von Hahnke was ushered in. "By order of his Colonel, First Lieutenant Baron von R——, of the Guard Hussars, has deposited this letter with me," drawled "Old Hahnke" in his most sympathetic tones.

The missive read:

"DEAR FRIEND: What's the use of ruining one's self? It is common report that you are playing fifth wheel on Charlotte Hohenau's triumphal chariot. How long do you suppose this can be kept from her crowned lover, who has his spies everywhere? Perhaps you think they are not 'so thick' as before? Believe me, it is but a passing disturbance. To catch a cold on a sleigh ride is quite in the order of things, but there are ninety-nine chances out of a hundred that a cold does not develop into pneumonia. Therefore, hands off."

The tendency of the two letters and their connection are easily traced. Aside from the sinister purpose of embroiling the war-lord in an undignified quarrel with

one of his officers, the writer was evidently eager to injure Countess Fritz in His Majesty's eyes. How he must hate that beautiful and vivacious little woman! If she were a Lucretia in licentiousness, or a *Gräfin* Cosel in the matter of spending the country's wealth,[1] she could not have evoked more virulent obloquy. After pillorying her as a common adulteress, the merciless traducer scourged her by accusations "in the face of which even innocence might lose courage." This is an extract from a note the Kaiser received in the first week of April, 1894, while staying at Abbazia:

"Lotka—dear grass widow!—complains that you are occasionally untrue to her,—little Prince Oscar is her informant, she says. She questions the children about boudoir secrets whenever she gets a chance."

Here I beg to protest once more that I give only the least offensive instances of the correspondence; if I attempted to stir at all below the surface of the morass, the reader would certainly say I was trying to outdo Rabelais's ring story, which latter, by the way, will never be obsolete at our Court, thanks to the verses Voltaire addressed to Frederick the Great when the latter presented him with a certain jewel.

"*L'anneau de Charle Magne et celui d'Angélique*
Etaient des dons moins précieux,
Et celui d'Hans Carvel, s'il faut que je m'explique,
Est le seul, que j'aimasse mieux."

This pleasantry, though highly enjoyed by Frederick at the time of its delivery, was destined to play a part in the

[1] Countess Cosel, mistress of Augustus the Strong, ruined the Electorate of Saxony by spending twenty million Thalers wrung from the people's pockets.

famous quarrel of King and philosopher, for later on His Majesty suspected some connection between these lines and the following, which Voltaire addressed to the Margravine of Baireuth (Wilhelmina, Princess of Prussia):

> "Even in the wildest fancies of the mind
> A far, faint gleam of truth we oft may find.
> I dreamed I wore a crown, and oh, my sweet,
> I knelt, a happy lover, at thy feet!
> I woke—yet 'twas not all that passed from me;
> I lost my empire, but lost not thee!"

To return to the Abbazia *billet*. The letter-writer, like "sansculottism accoutred" when it crushed Marie Antoinette, absolutely stopped at nothing in the way of indictments. In the preceding pages I have set down several of the charges brought against poor Countess Fritz, some containing a kernel of veracity, yet a travesty on truth, nevertheless; others, lying accusations on the face of them,—wildly exaggerated all; but if I had any notion to pursue the subject further I should certainly have to borrow the phraseology of Dr. von Krafft-Ebing's "*Psychopatia sexualis*" and some of the vile language *en vogue* in the prison-wards of the *Salpêtrière*. The writer seemed to have access to a library containing minute descriptions of all the viciousness enacted since the time when Jupiter raped Ganymede, Queen Semiramis made love to a horse, and Cæsar "was regarded as the husband of all wives and the wife of all husbands." And with this encyclopædia of wickedness at his elbow, he selected to-day one abominable morsel, in a week's time another, ten days later a third, shaped them into direct and distinct charges, and launched them forth against the unhappy woman in succession.

CHAPTER XVI

I said, in the preceding chapter, that four hundred of those anonymous communications had been surrendered to the prosecution, headed by the late Baron von Richthofen. That number probably comprised the fifth part of the letters actually distributed. The overwhelming majority of the recipients were ashamed to acknowledge the fact, as the correspondent was in the habit of trotting out old and long-forgotten skeletons, mauling over half-healed sores, and telling of nasty or dishonorable actions, some of them true, others invented. And who would blame a person, so vilely attacked, for giving the poisonous rag to the flames without calling a jury to sit on the contents? No matter how far-fetched a charge, and how conclusive its refutation, some little thing—the shadow of a doubt—always cleaves to the accused innocent. Besides, in matters where family honor is concerned, loyalty, like charity, begins at home. Once, when His Majesty was railing against a friend of his sister Charlotte, who flatly refused to turn over to Baron Richthofen an anonymous letter, I took the liberty of pointing out this maxim to him.

"I know of one loyalty only,—that to the King of Prussia," was William's stern rejoinder.

Magnificently said, Your Majesty, but, seeing that the King of Prussia, the present incumbent of the title at least, thinks himself so far above criticism as to be alike invulnerable to calumny and to just accusations, why should his

subjects risk their character to help him to run down a traducer whose power for evil he denies? And again: the correspondence did not always concern the person addressed, but frequently related to the passions, the failings, or the misfortunes of others,—an intimate or an enemy. "It would be a felony to turn this letter over to the police, or even to disclose its contents to *you*," said my colleague, Countess Bassewitz, one morning when I was in her apartment and the lackey, who had gone to the porter for her mail, brought in one of the abhorred communications. And her little Ladyship threw the thing, scarcely read, into the fire.

I tried to stop her. "His Majesty, who is sure to learn of the arrival of the missive, may ask you for it at luncheon," I expostulated.

"He cannot, for he has just started on the way to Liebenberg, and if he did, I would resist him, for the letter contained the vilest charge that can be brought against a married woman and her best friend's husband. And all the parties, all four of them, I count among my closest acquaintances!"

"You dear girl," I cried, "you speak of the former governor of our Princes and the Meiningen's *Hofdame*."

Little Miss Innocence had to sit down; my telepathic performance had so shocked her.

"Major von Falkenhayn and Frau von Berger! What do you know about them?"

"Nothing supernatural, I am sure." The frightened look on the *Gräfin's* pretty face amused me. "The fact is, Herr and Frau von Berger's matrimonial venture proved barren of results until they came to live in Berlin and accepted the Major as *frère et compagnon*,—*Hausfreund* in the broadest sense of the word. Since then the stork has paid annual visits to our colleague."

"But how do you know?"

"The facts have been disclosed to myself, to Countess and Count von Keller, *Fräulein* von Gersdorff, Herr and Madame von Kotze and the grand-master in the same way as to you, the writer probably expecting that one of us would inform Her Majesty. Being disappointed in us, he or she addressed you. Moreover," I concluded, "the facts are true in every particular. Whether the underlying insinuation is, I cannot tell."

The *anonymus*, as noticed, sometimes told truths with terrible directness; at other times he delivered himself of a *mixtum compositum* of the Simon Pure and of fancies that made it difficult to separate the grain from the chaff; occasionally he would sacrifice a pure girl to his ribald appetite for mischief-making. For instance, that cruel and criminal letter to a young lady about to be confirmed, mentioned in the foregoing chapter, told an unvarnished tale. Her mother was intimate for years with the former Austrian Military Plenipotentiary, Herr von Steininger, and her reputed father was so well aware of it that he allowed the Colonel to refer to the mother of "his" children as "*Unsere Frau.*" Steininger's remark to Herr von S——, now dead: "*We* had better look out, Baron, our wife is unfaithful to us. That devil of a Z—— is getting in his fine work," was a *mot* much quoted at Court. And these parties held official and personal relations with their Majesties. But they were not the only courtiers deservedly dragged to the pillory. Indeed, Montesquieu's characterization of society under Louis XIV and Louis XV as "ambition allied to idleness, baseness wedded to haughtiness; as the incarnation of the desire to become rich without work; as lickspittleness; as hatred of truth; traitorship and perfidiousness; as sophism, and contempt for public duties; as fear of virtuous princes, and as interest

in the King's vices,"—this terrible indictment fits our present conditions as if it had been written yesterday, instead of a hundred and fifty years ago. And how could it be otherwise? William's surpassing weaknesses—limitless vanity, despotic inclinations, and unrestrained egotism—are echoes of the "*l'etat c'est moi*" and "*après nous le déluge*" theories of centuries ago,—albeit more authentic,—and it is death for a courtier, or for a minister of state, not to cater to these idiosyncrasies. Besides, the German noble and idle classes are not one whit better, in point of morality, than those of England, of France, or Russia. In one respect they are worse, I think: they are, without exception, infinite tattlers. Though flattering myself with the endowment of fair observatory capabilities, and though I keep my eyes open as I go along, Berlin society women, I confess, have frequently astonished me by information concerning my master and mistress that I would never dream of noticing, though the affairs mentioned happened under my very nose. And Kaiser and Kaiserin are as bad as the rest. All memoirs of royalty agree that august personages are impassioned gatherers of small gossip; the two Napoleons, the Alexanders, the great Frederick, Joseph II and Louis XV, the Regents of France and of Great Britain,—all had their Poellnitzes and Fouchés, but inherent craftiness, at the same time, kept them from compromising their own thoughts or the conclusions they drew from the information received. My mistress is perhaps too little sophisticated to follow these examples; besides, being a lonely woman, she feels the necessity of an exchange of thoughts. With the Emperor, it is impulsiveness that gets the better of his dignity all the time. His faculties of conception act like piston-rods driven by a powerful engine,—a *perpetuum mobile*, as it were,—and he can never resist the temptation to inform those around him of the current of his

ideas. When he decides to change an old friend for a new, to dismiss one official or advance another, he wants all the world to know it; he wants to strike terror to, or evoke surprise in, the hearts of the whole people.

In the foregoing the campaign of defamation has been laid at the doors of a duo, a male and female. Undoubtedly two persons of opposite sexes—the female in the lead, so far as actual work was concerned—started the crusade, and to that pair belongs the discredit of having plunged a score of innocent people, among them half-grown boys and girls, into wretchedness; but they did not remain alone in this business long. Their example bred a host of imitators. At the New Year's reception of 1894, one of the party conveying the Empress Frederick's congratulations told me Her Majesty had said that one-half of the Court society was now writing anonymous letters to the other half, and *vice versâ*, and for that reason she would never again live in Berlin for any length of time. And that was not merely one of Her Majesty's pungent Briticisms that pass for *mots* in Berlin, but the sober truth. Not only was the number of missives sent out beyond the physical power of two pairs of hands, even admitting that one of them wielded a typewriter with all the paraphernalia of carbons and stylus-pens,—the range of topics touched upon was too varied and comprehensive for any brace of scoundrels to handle. Their Majesties' doings and the carryings on of the Hohenaus and Kotzes were of course public property, so to speak, in our circle; to comment on their actions was easy enough, but that the intimate affairs of the von Müllers, the von Schultzes, and the von Meyers[1] were treated with equal alacrity proved that the passion for epistolary blackguardism

[1] Names that in Germany are as common as Brown and Smith in English-speaking countries.

had become contagious, and that the Emperor's mother was right, or pretty nearly right. If the genius of Anarchy had started out to destroy the nation's great by carrying discord and hatred into their midst and by setting one powerful family against the other, he could not have assailed the natural opponents of lawlessness with greater prospect of certainty and despatch. But while all suffered under the reign of terror,—the guillotining, the fusillading, and *noyading* of reputations,—none underwent crueler torments at the hands of the vilifier than Auguste Victoria and her cousin morganatic. I must admit, though, that Her Majesty's chagrin at the initial letters was not of long duration. Their form, of course, nauseated the woman, and their text wounded the wife in her, but the baseness of the undertaking itself did not seem to impress the sovereign lady, and from the very beginning she was of opinion that the perpetrator would, nay, must, escape. I often had it on my tongue to inquire into the reason for this assumption, but etiquette forbade.

A circumstance that provoked general discussion was the leniency with which the *anonymus* passed by Duke Günther. His "vocabulary of lasciviousness" had been enriched by only three contributions of the letter-writer, he declared, and these he handed to the Kaiser. They were in keeping with the general run, but contained neither references to His Highness's debts, nor to his mistresses, nor to any other ticklish point in his career; in short, to quote the President of Police, they were "suspiciously harmless."

"If I were unmarried, like you, I should be angry at being treated in this milk-and-water style," said George Radziwill to the Duke once.

"I have never thought of that," Günther is reported to have answered,—an expression that created much surprise at the time.

In the beginning of 1894, when hundreds of pens were busy composing scurrilous notes, my mistress received several missives that completely unnerved her, although their contents did not refer to escapades on the part of the Emperor, but, on the other hand, were inventions so stupid as to be almost pitiable. I dare hint at only one of the lot,—a photograph representing a naked female with Her Majesty's face and features, and at her side Court-chaplain Stoecker in *puris naturalibus*, save for his well-known clerical bib. The letter that accompanied this beastly cartoon purported to explain why Charles the Ninth's soldiers called the biggest cannon the French boasted of "*La Reine Mère.*"[1]

This reflection upon her platonic friendship for the bigoted and ambitious parson threw my poor mistress into a fever from which she recovered only after a week or ten days, when the Kaiser's silence demonstrated that he had not been treated to a fac-simile of the cartoon. As a matter of fact, though, the copy intended for William had been intercepted by General von Scholl, who, without telling what he knew, persuaded the Empress, in the course of time, to drop Stoecker and forego all interference on his behalf. So the *anonymus* became indirectly responsible for the complete annihilation of the once puissant preacher, whose fall recalls the French definition of the term: "What is courtly policy?" Answer: "To place the King on the *chaise percée* in the morning, and empty it over the head of the retiring Minister of State in the afternoon." From 1894 to 1896, inclusive, the Kaiser, his adjutants, his friends, the aristocracy, the conservatives, and almost the entire press engaged in "rotten-egging"

[1] The Queen-Mother referred to was Catherine de Medici, notorious for her amorous adventures.

Stoecker, and Auguste Victoria, who ought to have stood by him, kept silent.

Some time after the receipt of the Stoecker picture, on a beautiful March Sunday (the Emperor was absent just then), Princess Louise drove up while my mistress was having her hair dressed for second breakfast.

"Princess Frederick Leopold?" repeated the Empress, when I made the announcement.

"So the *Kammerdiener* reports, Your Majesty."

"Something must have happened at Glienecke! Quick, Countess, go ask my sister's pardon, and beg her to come in here," and, turning to her women, Her Majesty added: "You may retire for the present."

The Kaiser and Frederick Leopold had not been on good terms for some time, and the royal sisters, who, of course, take sides with their husbands, had seen each other at stated occasions only during the past year. This explains my mistress's surmisal that something was amiss.

Princess Louise was never handsome, but she looked a fright that morning. Her eyes were red and her face was blotched. "You must send everybody from the room and antechamber before I begin to speak to Her Majesty," she said.

The subject of conversation between the sisters was an anonymous note.

"If you want to know why Frederick Leopold calls you a woman of the second class, consult your mirror when you go to bed to-night, and compare your reflection with the torso I enclose. The photograph was made by your husband—from life. What a charming model 'Lotka' makes! See the sweet abandonment of her figure! behold the slope of her royal shoulders, the firm bosoms! Ah, the von der Decken is not fool enough to suckle her children as you and your sister do. No wonder Frederick Leopold honors her by the title of 'woman of the first class,'" etc.

The letter went on to tell "what might happen if 'Loloki' learned of the relations between his mistress and His Royal Highness," and it was this semi-threat that brought Princess Louise to Auguste's feet. She asked her sister nothing more nor less than to ransack His Majesty's mail-bag for a fac-simile of the tell-tale letter (there were always duplicates, you know). This my mistress refused to do. "I cannot believe in the reported intimacy between Willie and Countess Fritz," she said, "and will undertake nothing to either set right or deny the scandalous surmisal."

When the Kaiser returned next day, it became evident at once that he had a brand new grievance against "Milord of Glienecke," whom he held up to ridicule more than ever, and the ultimate result of it all was Frederick Leopold's appointment to the position of Brigadier of the Fourth Guard Infantry, the decree being issued November 14, on his twenty-ninth birthday. The son of the famous Red Prince reduced to the foot, when he had confidently expected to obtain a command in the cavalry. It was the unkindest cut of all! He had to discard the lovely *Garde-du-Corps* uniform, in which he was wont to outshine His Majesty, and, besides, had to live in Berlin in the future. There was no redress against this, no chance for getting even except in a small, very small way. And this straw the Prince clutched with both hands. During the Emperor's absence on November 15, when we were just sitting down to luncheon, the new General was announced.

My mistress was at first inclined to be angry. I heard her say to Countess Brockdorff: "Why, has my brother-in-law forgotten our meal-hours?" But a second later she ordered her *Kammerherr* to conduct His Royal Highness to the reception-room, where she would see him at once. On the way to the *salon*, however, the sovereign lady

changed her mind, and went to the Shell Hall to intercept Frederick Leopold, if possible. But meanwhile the bird had flown. It happened this way. As soon as the servant had withdrawn to announce him, Frederick Leopold asked the porter whether this was not Her Majesty's luncheon hour.

"At Your Royal Highness's orders,—yes," answered the fat functionary.

The Prince thereupon threw his card into the porter's face with the words: "If that be so, I will not incommode the Kaiserin," and, addressing his coachman, he cried: "*Fort!*" (away!). The driver seemed to have waited for the signal, and, giving his horses whip and rein, started off at breakneck speed. By the time Her Majesty appeared in the vestibule the carriage was approaching Sans Souci.

It was a preconcerted game, of course. Leopold knew the very minute when we should sit down to table. He correctly guessed that Her Majesty would receive him, nevertheless, and, after inducing her to come out and meet him, cried "April-fool," and vamosed with the aid of the excellent horseflesh for which his stable is famous.

But while the highest in the land were pestered, their closest friends did not escape, particularly the women who, as narrated in chapters XIII and XIV, were just then fighting for supremacy in William's affections. Indeed, the letter-writing fiend was responsible for most of the occasional spats between Countess Fritz and Madame von Kotze, for he kept each rival posted on the other's triumphs or discomforts. To-day Madame von Kotze was apprised that Fritz Hohenau did not pay for *all* the diamonds his wife wore at the *Grand Cour*, and to-morrow Charlotte had it, on the best of authority, that William was more than Godfather to Her Excellency's infant. And the photographic assaults these pretty ladies suffered!

Countess Fritz as Sporus[1] beloved by Cæsar was one of the milder cartoons. A really funny picture which Madame von Kotze received was in two parts, styled "Various nocturnal adventures in Grunewald." The first division showed the Kaiser and his guest, the King of Saxony, sitting in a coach, gaily lighted by electricity inside and outside. Part second pictured the Emperor as he helped Countess Fritz into a coupé, at the entrance of the forest, and blew out the solitary carriage-lantern before getting in himself.

The letters and pictures addressed to these parties were turned over to Baron von Richthofen, and a royal *auditeur* was especially charged with collecting evidence in the matter, he, like the President of Police, being vested with the power of *inquirendo*. An example of this gentleman's activity and failings was given in Chapter IX. I, for one, have never been able to discover his usefulness, unless a talent for piling up stacks of legal documents counts. Like the *mouchard* of the French-detective story, this worthy was always "on the trail" of the villain, but never approached near enough to lay hands on him, at least not on the right party. Lastly, the Kaiser engaged Herr von Tausch, his own *press-cossack*,[2] to act as *rechercheur* under his personal guidance, and to the discretion of this trio the members of the royal family, the *entourage*, and everybody associated with our Court and the highest ministerial circles were delivered up, bound hand and foot, and gagged besides, if you please.

That one's letters were committed to the inquisitorial board was really one of the minor hardships; the oral

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[1] Sporus was a Roman lad whom Nero metamorphosed (as far as possible) into a woman and publicly married.

[2] The German for press-agent.

examinations were odious, though conducted in a dignified manner, but not infrequently part of the evidence became public property, viz.: when Herr von Tausch thought it well to give information to the press, and such bad faith was intolerable. It was this disloyal policy—a freak developed by William's Lombroso studies — that drove so many great families to withdraw from Court. The princely houses of Stolberg and Carolath, the Duke of Sagan, Herr von Tiele-Winckler, the Maltzans, Perponchers, Harrachs and others had no ambition to see their palaces fired so that William might boil a couple of eggs in the ashes of their good name.

For the whole inquiry, strictly speaking, turned on the everlasting theme of "insult to Majesty."

"*Eine Rotte vaterlandsloser Gesellen*" (a band of unpatriotic scoundrels) — His Majesty's favorite term for characterizing his enemies — had dared to carry its intrigues to the steps of the throne (William would never admit that they had invaded his very bedroom); *ergo*, all society must rise to rid him of these nuisances. That the paladins upon whom he called were quite busy defending their own firesides, and were forced to leave their families unprotected while they followed his invitation; that, moreover, by placing their correspondence at his disposal, they jeopardized their wives' and daughters' fair names, their own and their sons' honor,—what mattered that? Somebody had interfered with the master's pleasure; it was in the nature of things that everybody else should suffer. Besides, there had arisen a contingency, the existence of which was suspected by a few in the inner circle only: the authorship of many letters, especially those sent out the first twelvemonth, had been traced to a member of the royal family. If one or more of his imitators were brought to bay, the tracks of the original *anonymus* could be covered up for good.

During all this time the intrigues between His Majesty's favorites, females and males, and between the English and anti-English factions at Court, continued, and, naturally, Countess Fritz and Madame von Kotze stood in the first battle line. They fought separately and individually. It was a private feud, though, as the husbands of both women were counted Anglomaniacs. A powerful ally of Madame von Kotze was Duke Günther, not because he despised *this* rival of his sister less, but because he hated Countess Fritz more. The Hohenlohes—one of their clan, Marguerite d'Ujest, married William Hohenau — and their numberless cousins and nieces and aunts used their influence against the Kotzes, of course, as the Kaiser's unwillingness to make the Hohenaus Princes of Liegnitz was said to be due to Madame von Kotze's dissuasive arguments. No matter how often Charlotte von der Decken held the arched emblem of pseudo-sovereignty in her grasp after a *tête-à-tête* with the imperial cousin, before the parchment was signed the "Kotze woman" frightened the Emperor into abandoning the project by representing to him the ridiculous figure he would cut by openly acknowledging illicit relations. As for William, he was strictly impartial. Enjoying the good things both Herr von Kotze and the younger Hohenau provided for his delectation, he honored both gentlemen with his distinguished friendship, possibly giving to the Kotze *ménage* the benefit of his company more often than to the other, for purely personal reasons. Kotze, you must know, is the very type of a man after William's heart. In his agile and pleasing presence he combines von Hahnke's suppleness with von Plessen's devotion to duty and von Scholl's *bonhomie*. There probably never was an hour in his life, full of airy nothingnesses, when he would not have risked his soul for the King. He gave his services to the Court gratis, and spent hundreds of

thousands per annum to entertain His Majesty. In short, he lived for the royal master only. I remember meeting him *Unter den Linden* one fine morning, his cousin, Count Haeseler, commander of the Fifteenth Army Corps, being my escort.

"My dear Leberecht," cried the General, after the usual greetings, "why, by all the saints, do you wear a grass-green cravat?"

"You forget, cousin," replied Kotze, with an injured look, "a green cravat is most appropriate to-day. His Majesty went a-hunting this morning."

And all of a sudden it was whispered that this humble servant of the fetich royal,—he who would have worn *couleur de caca de Prince Royal* with as much avidity as *couleur de chasse*,—the amiable *viveur*, distinguished comrade, officer of splendid record for integrity and loyalty,—it was rumored that this man, noted for a certain amount of horse-sense, but an ignoramus on all topics unconnected with the humdrum existence of a man of fashion,—that Kotze, who was no more addicted to the pen than to overalls, was the anonymous graphomaniac for whom we had been searching so long. One fine morning the report was on everybody's lips,—no one knew who first uttered the calumny.

It was Hervey, author of "Memoirs of the Court of George II," who gave form to the truism:

> "Slander, that worst of poisons, ever finds
> An easy entrance to ignoble minds,"

and he had been a politician and courtier long enough to get to the root of Court intrigues. Exclamations such as: "Pst! Kotze will hear you," "I let it out to Leberecht, it will be in the anonymous letters to-morrow," became all at

once as common at our Court as "Your Majesty," "Your Excellency," or "*gnädigeste Gräfin.*" Only in the presence of the Kaiser and Kaiserin were the accusers silent, so far as my immediate observation went, at least. Later on I learned that the "mobbing" of Kotze started in William's most intimate circle, and, moreover, that the lying stories affecting his integrity were spread by some of the Kaiser's right-hand men in a clandestine manner. Whether His Majesty sanctioned this or not, personally he kept up a show of most gracious affection for the persecuted, and whenever my mistress hinted at the expediency of dispensing with Herr von Kotze's services, he overruled her cavils by a flood of praise for "loyal Leberecht."

"Why," he said on one of these occasions, "it would be impossible to dismiss him now. I have just reinstated him in the army. As you well know, I like to surround myself with persons of military rank, and, to facilitate this with respect to Leberecht, I made him *Rittmeister z. D.*[1] Besides, think of the scandal his fall would create. He is brother-in-law, cousin, and uncle to half the nobles of the realm,—my *Kammerherr* and my friend."

And four Sundays later, when the whole Court was assembled in the state apartments of the Schloss, awaiting their Majesties, in whose suite we were to attend the formal corner-stone-laying for the new cathedral, General von Hahnke's adjutant appeared unexpectedly in our midst,

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[1] Herr von Kotze left his regiment, the Guard Lancers, some ten years ago with the character of *chef d'Escadron a. D.*, which means "retired." The term z. D. (*zur Disposition*) infers that an officer is still connected with the army, though not in actual service, being, as it were, at the disposition of his superiors, who call upon him when occasion demands. The important point of this is that an officer "z. D." is responsible to the military courts only, while the officer "a. D." is subject to ordinary civil jurisdiction.

and walking up to Auguste Victoria's master of ceremony, invited him to come outside. Taking the captain's entrance for the signal of their Majesties' coming (we had left them in Potsdam that morning), we ladies advanced toward the great staircase, at the head of which we saw Kotze in earnest conversation with the Chief of the Military Cabinet.

"Are you not going?" I whispered, in passing.

"No," he answered, with a strange tremor in his voice; "please make my excuses to Countess Brockdorff; I shall be detained."

Ten minutes later the news spread that, upon receiving proof of Kotze's perfidy by means of a report delivered to him while on the way to Berlin, the Kaiser had signed a warrant for his arrest in the *Fürstenzimmer* of *Potsdamer Bahnhof* and had sent von Hahnke ahead to apprehend the culprit so as to avoid meeting him at the festivities. That these details were correct I learned in the course of the evening from Baroness von Reischach, *née* Princess Ratibor, wife of Empress Frederick's Court-marshal. Her Grace had it from her brother Franz, Major in the First Guard Dragoons and one of Kotze's most outspoken enemies.

Prince Franz, a middle-aged bachelor, had sprung into sudden prominence of late,—he and his *ablatus*, Herr von Schrader, the Kaiser's master of ceremony. Baron Schrader, it was soon learned, had denounced his colleague to the investigating board, and finally had brought formal charges against Kotze, submitting them to His Majesty on the morning of the cathedral celebration. General opinion at Court and in society was, of course, against the accused man. I say "of course," for distrust is a plant of rapid growth in an atmosphere where the praise of the lord's doings is one's best recommendation.

Her Majesty professed to be entirely unnerved by the shock; "she would never get over having associated so

long with vile traitors;" she had had "her misgivings," though. The Kaiser, on his part, struck heroic attitudes. He had "saved society," "thanks to his initiative, the homes of the nation's nobles were once more secure;" and the members of the royal family and the aristocracy hailed the lord-protector! On Sunday and Monday, *nota bene!*

There was also some sentimental by-play,—Madame von Kotze on her knees before William in the billiard-room of the Neues Palais, while Her Majesty and the children were playing at hide-and-seek in the garden outside. Auguste Victoria had an excellent view of the proceedings: a beautiful but wretched woman imploring her powerful friend's mercy for the husband about to be sacrificed that another might go free! William proud and adamant, as if he had never leaned upon the beautiful arm raised to him in anguish!

"It is of no use, *gnädige Frau*. Justice must be administered. He shall be treated like any common criminal."

Then a shriek, a fall, and the children cried as if with one voice: "What is papa doing to Auntie Kotze?"

"You *have* no Aunt Kotze," said the imperial mother cruelly, and motioning to the servant, standing at a respectful distance, gave orders that madame's carriage be brought around into the *Sandhof*, the other side of the palace, from where the lady should depart. At the same moment, Adele von Haake emerged from the door-windows of the billiard-room, announcing that the *Ceremonienmeisterin* had rallied and begged to be received by Her Majesty.

"Her Ladyship must apply in writing to my grand-mistress,—tell her that!" And the Empress ran off, followed by the puzzled youngsters.

But while the unhappy wife and favorite drove home toward Berlin (she had not the courage to take the train

for fear of being recognized), her avenger stalked into the palace-yard in the shape of a letter-carrier, bringing missives in the dreaded imitated print for both Kaiser and Kaiserin and many dignitaries. *Anonymus redivivus* paid his compliments to their Majesties and their Excellencies and called them names for being so stupid as to incarcerate such an innocent, a man whom only petty spite or gross incompetency could connect with a crime that called for much ready wit and a dare-devil spirit excusable only "in the highest spheres, if not the all-highest."

"Take my word for it," concluded each epistle, "before three weeks have passed, 'Loloki' will be obliged to open Kotze's prison doors and beg him, by all that is sacred to the royalist, to hold his tongue."

We must now recall some incidents that happened in April, shortly after their Majesties' return from Italy.

Ever since the close of the carnival season when she enjoyed her customary triumphs at the Emperor's side, Charlotte Hohenau had been bombarded by a succession of anonymous letters of the vilest description, but the missives left at her door after the re-establishment of the Court in Potsdam were not only vicious, but ominous to an alarming extent.

"'Loloki's' wife has got the better of you," wrote the mysterious scribe on April 10; "the Emperor will not kiss your arm ten days from now, for you will not be allowed to celebrate your thirty-first birthday in Berlin."

On April 13, after a parade at Tempelhofer Feld, His Majesty ordered Fritz Hohenau, *Rittmeister* of the First Guard Dragoons, to report to him. "I hereby transfer you to Hannover for one year, the order to take effect at once," he addressed Cousin Fritz, in his usual pompous style.

"At your Majesty's orders," replied Hohenau, without moving a muscle. The Kaiser looked at him in astonishment.

He had expected to surprise the *Rittmeister*, to see him chagrined, or at least confused.

"The fact that, hereafter, you will be unable to serve under the war-lord's eye seems to make little impression upon you," he thundered.

"Beg Your Majesty's pardon, but I had a presentiment of what would happen to-day,—a letter that I found in my morning mail."

"Not one of those anonymous rags?"

"Your Majesty has said it."

"I want to speak to my wife. Leave us alone." With these words, the Kaiser entered Her Majesty's library on the afternoon of parade-day, and before Countess Brockdorff, who told me of the occurrence, had time to withdraw, he continued: "Explain, madame, how matters that I confide to you, and to you alone, come to be hawked about by the letter-writing fiend. You fondly imagined Hohenau would be knocked silly by the news of his removal. A fine surprise: he knew all about it." What more was said on that occasion and on that subject I do not know. My mistress was visible to no one but her brother and Countess Brockdorff for the rest of the day, but next morning, when one of the ladies asked to be excused from second breakfast, as she intended to go to Berlin, Her Majesty carelessly remarked: "Then you may go with me and save your fare. The Kaiser told me yesterday he meant to take leave of the Hohenaus this morning, and I am going myself to pay some visits of condolence."

At twelve o'clock I accompanied the Kaiserin to the station. At the entrance stood General von Hahnke, bowing and saluting. "I did not know His Majesty was going away so early, and I must try to intercept him to obtain the all-highest signature for several orders," he said, in his ceremonious manner.

"So, so," nodded the Empress. She had not expected to meet the chief, and was hunting for words, as she always does, when confronted by a thing unusual.

"And I dare say, among my papers is one Your Majesty will heartily approve of," resumed Hahnke, with a lurking expression about his eyes. And as Her Majesty made no immediate answer, he added, lowering his voice: "the shifting of Fritz Hohenau to Hannover."

"Indeed, I heard of it. They had quite a scene about it on Tempelhofer Feld yesterday." The Kaiserin was now at her ease. "Your Excellency will take a seat in my car," she said, "and you, too, Countess, as Bassewitz does not seem to be coming. I must not be left alone with this gay soldier and Madame von Brockdorff." (Countess Bassewitz was the lady who had asked to be excused from luncheon.)

Once seated in the train, Herr von Hahnke became quite talkative, and I am indebted to his conversation for several facts concerning the anonymous letters mentioned in the foregoing pages. On the question of the moment, viz.: who might be the author of the last anonymous letter to the Hohenaus? he speculated long and laboriously.

"Thank God, I knew nothing of the proposed change," he said, in conclusion, "otherwise His Majesty might think me the tattler."

"Absurd!" cried the Empress, with a show of impatience; "but let that pass. What do you think His Majesty is doing in Berlin to-day?"

"As I had the honor to submit, the Kaiser has not been pleased to inform me of his intended trip."

"Then I will turn tale-bearer: at this moment he is probably in the boudoir of Countess Fritz."

"I beg my sovereign lady's pardon a thousand times; not in the *boudoir?*"

"What do you mean? I *command* you." In her excitement my mistress lost control of herself.

"I entreat Your Majesty will not think me guilty of an attempt at humor. Countess Hohenau's boudoir has been closed to everybody, including its mistress, since the recent police raid."

"Police raid?" gasped Auguste Victoria.

"By Herr von Richthofen and Herr von Tausch! After that, it is said, Madame Charlotte locked her boudoir and ever since has been positively afraid to go near the room."

"Tell us all about it, General."

Hahnke's report was very detailed. Here is a summary: Shortly after their Majesties' return from Italy, the police received information that the name of the author of the anonymous letters could be learned from a note in the possession of Countess Hohenau, this note being deposited in a *cassette*, secreted in a large box-chair in Her Ladyship's boudoir. Thereupon the chiefs of the investigating board repaired to the Hohenau *ménage*, and, Her Ladyship being absent, prevailed upon the Count to let them search his wife's room. The informant had told the truth. The letter was found and *a* name in it.

While the General delivered the concluding sentences, the Kaiserin had grown very pale.

"*A* name," said Countess Brockdorff, quickly; "it was all a hoax, then," and, assuming a semi-petulant air, she continued: "You should not have raised our hopes so high, General. Her Majesty and we ladies had expected to hear a solution of the mystery, and it was all wind after all."

Von Hahnke merely bowed and smiled.

We had meanwhile arrived in Berlin. Her Majesty and Countess Brockdorff got into one carriage, I into another, and the chief into a third.

As I prepared to take the train for Potsdam in the evening, a footman in the blue and yellow livery of the Schleswig-Holsteins approached. "His Highness invites Your Ladyship to his coupé," he said: "His Highness is going to the Neues Palais." The man conducted me to a first-class apartment, in front of which stood the usual carpeted stairs. I found Duke Günther enveloped in cigarette smoke, discussing the evening papers with his Court-marshal, Herr von Budenbrock.

"*Gnädigste Gräfin,*" he cried, "charmed to have your company. Lots of news to tell, though not from these," and he kicked the *Tageblatt* and *Post* under the seat; "they are as empty of real interest as usual."

I made some commonplace reply, and thanked His Highness for his courtesy. "Nonsense," he said, good-naturedly, "the obligation is entirely on my side. I am going to tell you a story which you must repeat to my sister immediately upon your arrival at the palace. You can see her in her dressing-room and I cannot, and I want Her Majesty to be posted before she comes to table."

Then, without preamble, he added: "Do you know what happened when the Kaiser visited the Hohenau this morning? He was in civilian dress, and, to make the surprise complete, rode in a *Droschke.* But, arrived at Bellevue Strasse, he found the servants lining the staircase, and 'Lotka' *en grande tenue*—low corsage, bare arms, diamonds, bouquet and all—awaiting him. The *anonymus*, through the usual channel, had announced this visit, arranged with so much secrecy!"

Let us now revert to the happenings of the June morning that saw Madame von Kotze's deepest humiliation. If the anonymous correspondent, by the letters mailed twenty-four hours after the *Ceremonienmeister's* arrest, had hoped to benefit poor Kotze, this calculation went wide of the mark.

the Kaiser ridiculing what he called "an attempt at impudent bamboozling."

"Pshaw," cried this doughty student of criminology, at dinner, "what a threadbare trick! The last of my '*Schutzmänner*' could have foretold that the guilty one would endeavor to mislead the prosecution by some such means, for, of course, he has an accomplice."

Quick as a dart, Auguste Victoria took up the thread. "That horrible woman! and she asked me for an audience only this morning."

"I did not say that I suspected Madame von Kotze," shouted the Emperor across the table; and I thought better of him for this flash of magnanimity, though his discourteous manner was painful to behold.

In the evening we were treated to an exposition of the "evidence." The late Herr von Schrader reviewed a dozen or more instances where the anonymous letters had referred to affairs known only to Herr von Kotze and one other party, either one of their Majesties or some high functionary.

"If that be the case," whispered the Princess of Meiningen, with whom I was sitting, "why does not William arrest himself or my sweet sister-in-law?" and, addressing the Kaiser, she said: "If knowledge of a certain fact be an element of incrimination, why are not *all* who were in possession of it prosecuted? If Herr von So-and-So spoke to Leberecht about a matter which, some time afterward, was used by the *anonymus*, why must Kotze be the guilty one and not the other?"

"Because," answered William, sarcastically, "your So-and-So left no traces of his felonious doings behind, while Herr von Kotze did." And His Majesty, assisted by an adjutant, produced two blotting-papers which, he said, were found on a desk in the *Adeliges Casino* immediately after Kotze had vacated the seat in front of it. "Look

at these marks," cried William, in a voice pregnant with turgid solemnity; "the impression of the word 'Loloki' in imitated Latin print, the brand we all know to our sorrow. What does Your Royal Highness say now?" he concluded, bowing to his sister.

"That the news is important, if true," answered Princess Charlotte, flippantly, but she added, as if suddenly aware that she had gone too far: "I mean, if it can be proved that Kotze used the blotters."

"He was not only the last, but the only gentleman to sit at the desk on the morning the discovery was made; besides, more blotters, similarly inscribed, were found in Kotze's private office in the Schloss." His Majesty's face beamed with self-complacency while he made this statement. He acted, every inch, the famous barrister summing up an important case.

On the half-dozen pieces of blotting-paper and the hearsay evidence alluded to, the prosecution rested its case before the court-martial which presently assembled to try Kotze; but even this scanty bit of incriminating material was quickly reduced by one-half, the most important half too: the government's expert in hand-writing declared that the supposed impressions were made on the blotters with pen and ink, the letters being placed upside down, presumably in order to mislead. This would have been accepted as *prima-facie* evidence of a conspiracy to ruin the defendant by manufactured evidence in any court of law, but the court-martial thought otherwise. It decided to ignore the blotters, and found Kotze guilty on the hearsay evidence alone.

When the first news of this strange sentence *par ordre de Mufti* reached the military prison in Linden Strasse, where *Rittmeister* von Kotze had been incarcerated for nearly a month, the warden shook his head. "His

Excellency has just departed in a royal coach, accompanied by His Highness the Hereditary Prince" (of Meiningen) "and the Minister of the Royal House, Excellency von Wedell-Piesdorff," he said to Herr von Berger, whom Princess Charlotte, unknown to her husband, had despatched to prepare Leberecht for the sentence, "and His Majesty," continued the warden, "signed the order for his release in person. Here it is,—the all-highest scrawl. I would not take a hundred marks for it."

It all happened on July 5. No sooner had the royal quick-change artiste heard of the probable disposition by the military court, than he decided that the Prussian eagle must soar above the biased judgment of those uniformed toadies. Hence the impromptu decree of release, the royal livery,—a triumphal chariot in this case,—and the order to his most exalted civil representative to fetch Kotze from gaol. The royal house had sinned against him,—the Minister of the royal house must convey the sovereign's regrets.

That the Kaiser would not sanction the court-martial's findings, so evidently the outcome of parasitism, became known at the palace the same evening. He had dropped Lombroso and suddenly began to talk of the King's "most sacred prerogative," that of administering justice without need of professional jurists and judges. "Peter the Great left only one advocate at home when he came to visit my ancestor," he declaimed, "and this one he promised to hang upon his return after witnessing Frederick William's absolute methods. One cannot do this nowadays, but I mean to exercise the precious right of reversing unjust sentences whenever interference is thrust upon me." One of the Kaiser's adjutants characterized this speech "as a continuation of one delivered to Her Majesty. The Kaiserin," he said, "came into the study this morning to offer

some slight objection to the special honors designed for Kotze, but His Majesty cut her short by a rhapsody on the blind goddess. His present declaration is for the benefit of the Schrader-Hohenau-Ratibor coterie. The Kaiser will have no more of their accusations and inventions."

Indeed not; and notice was served to outsiders as well. The *Reichsanzeiger* published a decree, forthwith ordering a new trial by another branch of the army, "the Third Corps." The disowned Guards had to declare Kotze's honor intact, while at the same time the Hannoverian Lancers, to which regiment Baron Schrader belonged, censured the latter for accusing a brother officer. Now followed a series of duels, in which Herr von Kotze alternately maimed his traducers and was maimed himself, culminating in the famous Schrader-Kotze combat that left His Majesty's informant on the field, a dead man.

During all that time, and up to this very day, the Kotzes did not come to Court, though formally invited as of old: Madame von Kotze could never get over that brutal scene in the billiard-room,—"never, *jamais*, and if I live a hundred years." And William's little attentions—the sending of Easter eggs, of bottles of Steinberger Cabinet, of photographs, all duly advertised in the newspapers—worked no change in this attitude of proud unapproachableness. "She demands not only public avowal of her husband's innocence on your part, but that the real culprit's name be divulged, as that seems to be the only way of punishing him!" The above is the ever-recurring refrain of Princess Charlotte's correspondence with the Emperor, "Mrs. Meiningen" having charge of the *rapprochement* proceedings and conducting them with great tact and kindness. A staunch friend was Her Royal Highness to the Kotzes all through their prosecution. She kept open house for them in town and out during their sorest trials, and in every

respect treated the Treskow without the "c" as one loving sister should another.

"I am only doing my duty," I heard her say to Her Majesty, when the latter upbraided her for having received the *Ceremonienmeisterin* on the day of the Schrader duel. "I believe in justice, though I never talk about it, and in practising Christianity even if I have no money for churches."

The Kaiser endeavored to give the conversation a humorous turn. "You two remind me of that new play by Sardou," he said,—"Madame Sans-Gêne, which represents Napoleon's sisters and sisters-in-law forever assailing each other and quarrelling."

"If I were a bishop's wife, I should be less irritable, I am sure," laughed Her Royal Highness.

"Do not remind me of my office of *summus episcopus*," cried William; "it brings Stoecker to my mind, and I want to forget all about that bigoted *Pfaff*. He is a troublesome subject."

"If he is such a nuisance, why do you not unfrock him? you refrocked Leberecht when it suited you ——" At this moment, Countess Brockdorff, after exchanging a look with Her Majesty, got up and left the room, and I followed.

This refrocking of Leberecht half solves the anonymous letter mystery. It occurred, as stated, some time after their Majesties had returned from Abbazia in company of Duke Günther, and when the anonymous communications, especially those sent to Countess Fritz, made a specialty of divulging secrets of the imperial boudoir, of decisions arrived at or topics discussed in the privacy of *tête-à-têtes* between their Majesties. It is also worth knowing that, at the period mentioned, William and Günther were on extraordinarily good terms, while the Empress, who had been deprived of her brother's society for a year or longer, passed many

hours with him day by day. Günther, you know, left the country in the spring of 1893 under a cloud, a cloud formed by the smoke of burned stationery; namely, a gross or so of anonymous letters of the style described, and the authorship of which had been traced to His Highness by *Herren* von Richthofen and von Tausch. Then the Empress had come forward, offering to send her brother around the world on condition that those incriminating letters be turned over to her. They were—after they had been photographed.

And now this hopeful ne'er-do-well, after many promises of reform, had come back, and almost simultaneously recommenced the exploitation of the Kaiser and Kaiserin's most intimate sayings and doings, such as exchanges of confidences and of promises affecting the official status of certain persons. The letters saying that Countess Fritz would not celebrate her thirty-first birthday in Berlin, that Hohenau would be removed to Hannover, and, last but not least, that the Emperor would visit Her Ladyship on a certain morning, were specimens of the kind. We have the Kaiser's word for it, that the first two statements were based on disclosures made to Her Majesty, and to her alone, and that William's proposed visit to Charlotte von der Decken was kept a secret is evident from General von Hahnke's words. To the Empress alone William divulged his intention, probably with a view of adding to her discomfort. Thereupon, as reported in these papers, Her Majesty locked herself in her room and saw no one but her brother and her grand-mistress for the rest of the day and evening.

Rejecting even the possibility of Countess Brockdorff's participation in the intrigue, suspicion points directly to Duke Günther as the *anonymus*. He was imperial Auguste Victoria's only *confident*, kept her posted about all the Kaiser's carryings on, and on his part examined into the

minutest details of the royal couple's lives in order to trim his sails according to the wind. Moreover, the reader will remember the conversation I had with His Highness on the train. When, some time later, I mentioned the subject to Herr von Richthofen, he exclaimed at once: "He is at his old tricks again," and then added: "Upon my word, *gnädigste Gräfin*, I wish you had not told me of your adventure." And that remark of Günther's to George Radziwill: "I never thought of that" (namely, that a rake like himself deserved more compromising letters than he received), offers food for reflection, incriminatory reflection, as pointed out once before. To complete the chain of circumstantial evidence, it is but necessary to recall His Highness's enmity to the Hohenaus, his love of gossip, his long-standing secret opposition to the Kaiser, and his violent partisanship for his sister, the Empress.

There are hundreds eating the Kaiser's bread, or visiting the palace, who, in their heart of hearts, hold my mistress equally guilty with her brother,—the late Herr von Richthofen was one of them,—but it gives me pleasure to report that, sifting and resifting the evidence, I failed to discover a single compromising circumstance substantiating that charge. Neither was Auguste Victoria an accessory before the fact, as is frequently hinted at in Court society, though her share in the intrigue was both active and passive: her complaints of William's infidelities gave the first impetus to the persecution of Countess Fritz, Madame von Kotze, and others, and her tattling habits furnished, innocently enough perhaps, ammunition for most of the pestiferous bombs.

That the Kaiser can keep nothing to himself has been already stated, also that he is in the habit of speaking ill of women, and that his adjutants and friends keep him posted in all matters of gossip, the freshest in the market.

William, then, supplied Auguste Victoria with all the scandals going, adding his personal observations and an outline of his intentions and decisions; the Kaiserin furnished the news to Günther, and Günther, not to be outdone, related to his sister the small talk about William and his favorites. The ducal store-house of both Majesties' secrets finally utilized them for his own purpose: to annoy his sister's rivals and to play tricks on His Majesty. And if there was a surplus, he disposed of it where it would do the most harm: among the intriguers so plentiful in the idle classes.

The first batch of anonymous letters was intended by His Highness as a sort of ante-carnival joke after the revel in Castle Grunewald, but, seeing he hit the bull's-eye, he fired another, a third, a fourth, ten, twenty, a hundred shots in quick succession, all the time persuading himself that he was working in the interest of his much-abused sister. Then imitators arose, first a few, later on a host of them, until, in the end, "one-half of Berlin society was writing scurrilous notes to the other." Ultimately the Duke had to "absquatulate," or, to use a less high-sounding term, had to take leg-bail, and Countess Fritz and Madame von Kotze enjoyed a brief spell of freedom from what seemed to be a perennial annoyance, though there were plenty of good friends left to give them an occasional dig. When His Highness had run to the end of his Cook's ticket, the old game started anew, the letter alleging that Countess Hohenau had interrogated the Kaiser's children about happenings in the imperial bed-chamber having set the ball rolling.

I confess that it took me quite a long while to get to the bottom of the intrigue; that some such solution would be forthcoming I had suspected from the beginning, and even if I had been royalty's most trusting toady, the evidence accumulating before my eyes on the one hand, and various

hints of my friend, the Princess of Meiningen, on the other, would have disillusioned me.

But when proofs of Günther's implication were so abundant, could the Emperor possibly remain non-cognizant of the facts? No, indeed! but as there were other guilty ones besides Günther, and as numbers meant safety in this case, William clutched most readily at the seam-rent evidence presented against the *Ceremonienmeister.* "What you say looks very probable," he told Baron Schrader, according to Princess Charlotte's story; "continue in your watchfulness and collect all additional proofs obtainable. As soon as anything in the line of direct evidence presents itself, we will seize the scoundrel."

Those bound upon poor Kotze's destruction then went to manufacture proofs in the shape of the "Loloki" blotters, and the Emperor, magnanimous being, gave Kotze back his uniform. "If Leberecht is the author of some of the anonymous letters," he calculated, "the star-chamber is the place to discuss his crime and, if need be, that of his partner or partners. No matter whom he may incriminate before the court-martial, no one outside the officers acting as judges will be the wiser."

At his trial, loyal Leberecht did not breathe a word of what he knew against Günther, denying, moreover, when directly questioned, that he had ever suspected the royal black sheep.

And now our modern Vicar of Bray turned "Papist—Jesuit!" Changed conditions called for a reiteration of the old faith: Kotze had been grievously wronged; His Majesty had never thought him guilty; his accusers had been misled or, worse still, misleading. Down with them, and shame on the biased judges!

But, at the same time, His Majesty would not let the real culprit escape. Madame la Marquise de Villemonble, who claimed to be a great-granddaughter of some Duc

d'Orleans and a Mademoiselle Florence, had been Duke Günther's amanuensis, putting the pepper and salt, the mustard and cress, into the letters. She was forthwith conducted to the frontier by two trusted members of the political police and warned never to show her face again in Berlin. This piquant little woman had been devoted to the Duke for two years, and had often helped to entertain His Majesty,—we met her once shuffling her lace petticoats above a centre-table in Castle Grunewald,—but now all her protests went for naught. As to His Highness, he was given to understand that he would not be tolerated in Berlin or Potsdam for more than a week at a time. The Emperor would not allow him to open a new establishment in the capital or neighborhood, and threatened to turn him adrift if he disobeyed.

The mystery as to who accused Günther in letters addressed to Countess Hohenau and the police has remained as unfathomable as that respecting the identity of the falsifiers of the "Loloki" blotters. Many think the Princess of Meiningen indited those epistles, but whether there is for this surmisal more substantial evidence than Her Highness's partisanship I am unable to say. An old friend of Empress Frederick suggests that the balance of inferential proofs inclines to Charlotte as much as to the police, who may have employed this method in preference to advising the Emperor directly of his brother-in-law's repeated offence. The Hohenzollerns have always been mischief-makers, privately as well as politically, and that trick of the *anonymus* to affix the heads of persons to be lampooned to lay-figures in disgusting attitudes is but an old idea borrowed from the Sans Souci archives, which report that Frederick the Great ordered scenes painted from the lascivious volume *Thérèse Philosophe*,[1] the *dramatis personæ*

[1] The authorship of this vile book has been imputed alternately to the King and to Voltaire.

to be likenesses of his friend d'Argens and the latter's wife, the former dancer Cochois. To both these persons the caricatures imputed the most loathsome unnatural crimes. These pictures were smuggled into d'Argens's bedroom and hung upon the walls during the couple's absence. The same evening, when the unsuspecting philosopher and his innocent better-half were preparing to retire by the light of a wee taper, the King and his friends suddenly rushed in upon them, each armed with a candelabrum, thereby lighting up the room to perfection and disclosing its strange decorations, which Frederick insisted had been in the place ever since d'Argens's wedding night, and, indeed, formed part and parcel of his conjugal outfit.

As to the Prussian police, anonymous letter-writing and letter-stealing have figured largely in its history. Under Frederick William IV, it was a toss-up whether the President of Police, von Hinckeldey, or the Prime Minister, Baron Manteuffel, was the most expert mail-bag rifler and slanderer by means of clandestine correspondence. These two worthies even went so far as to employ *mouchards* to steal letters from the King's desk and pockets. One of the documents so secured was a letter from Czar Nicholas, written in August, 1855, in which he said that he would be able to hold Sebastopol if the besiegers were not too hard on Fort Malakoff, the city's only weak point.

A Prussian policeman sold this invaluable information to one of Napoleon's agents within three days of the receipt of the letter, whereupon the French, on September 8, assailed Malakoff, stormed it, and put an end to the war of the Crimea.

This excursion into history, though seemingly far-fetched, must not be underestimated, for, now that the originator of the anonymous letter scandal and his accessories have either been silenced, neutralized, or dispersed, the historic facts

related offer the only lucid explanation for the continuance of the nuisance. The poisonous rags ceased coming for a short span of time toward the end of 1894, but the Kaiser's intended holiday present to Uncle Chlodwig from the "Disposition Fund" roused the *anonymus* to renewed activity during the Christmas season of that year, and he has kept it up ever since. To mention a recent date, it was that same scribbling fiend who forced Ambassador Herbette to retire from Berlin in 1896 by reports of alleged intimate relations between William and Madame l'Ambassadrice.

CHAPTER XVII

In a preceding chapter I invited the reader to witness the taking off of a Minister,—Botho Eulenburg losing the Chancellorship because William had to forego his accustomed bath of blood—hare's blood—(at Liebenberg, October 23, 1894), and while on the subject I will add, incidentally, what I omitted to state in my earlier reference; namely, that Count Botho and the war-lord indulged in a violent quarrel on that occasion. The then Prussian Premier seems to have followed His Majesty, when William ran away from the hunting-field, and tried to keep him from going to bed by opening up a conversation on politics. William listened morosely, until Botho, in an effort to improve the all-highest temper, began to demonstrate his well-known ideas about a suspension of the constitution,—government by royal decree. This is William's *beau ideal* of kingship, and the Kaiser had repeatedly upheld His Excellency's views on the subject in the state council as well as privately and before a roomful of people in the palace, but under the circumstances he chose to consider the Premier's suggestions as mere bids for office.

"You forget," he said, icily, "that since the days of the great Frederick, Prussia has trebled in size and population and that the imperial diadem largely adds to the King's burden. *I* cannot do everything myself."

Under the lash of this remark the Premier paled. "Your Majesty led me to believe that you placed some slight trust in my abilities," he said.

"I never opined that you were a Bismarck, and nothing in your past career convinces me that you are," cried the Emperor, stamping his foot impatiently. "And now," he continued, "with your permission, His Majesty will go to his room."

Philip Eulenburg advanced to conduct him, but the Kaiser motioned him aside. "It is your cousin's place. Send for my grand-master!" and as the latter was not on hand, he insisted upon going unattended.

Botho was beside himself with rage, and bitterly reproached his relatives for enticing him to this meeting. On the spur of the moment he wrote out his resignation, but found the Kaiser in a temporizing mood next morning.

In similar manner the retirement of other ministers of state has been allowed to take place. The majority went out after a row, like wronged menials in a badly-managed household. Indeed, the Kaiser looks upon them as servants and not only through his divine-right spectacles. From Chancellor to the last of the Secretaries, he treats them as *Handlanger*.[1]

Almost every day, when the Kaiser is at home, we hear this sort of dialogue at table:

Her Majesty to the Emperor: "You are going to Berlin" (or Potsdam) "to-morrow?"

His Majesty: "Exactly so." (*Ironically*) "You saw that in the calendar?"

The Empress: "Yes, but I thought Uncle Chlodwig" (or Herr Miquel) "was coming with his report."

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[1] "Unskilled help." In 1897 William designated Bismarck as having been his grandfather's *Handlanger*.

Kaiser: "I ordered him to meet me at Wildpark" (or some Berlin station) "at 7 A.M., so that he may read his paper to me on the cars."

And Prince Hohenlohe is seventy-eight years old, while none of his colleagues is below threescore. What limitless egotism, what contempt for the feelings of others, such an order involves! In December, 1895, the Kaiser invited the Chancellor to come to Potsdam at an unearthly hour to attend him on a trip to Spandau, where he proposed to exercise some regiments on snow-shoes. While breakfasting in his train, His Majesty would be pleased to listen to an epitome of the leading questions of the day delivered by his venerable relative, who is old enough to be his grandfather.

"*Madame la Princesse* is awaiting Your Majesty in the saloon-car," reported Count Pückler, at that time imperial travelling-marshal, at the entrance of the station.

"Princess Hohenlohe?" said the Kaiser, hastening his step. "Can my Chancellor be ill? That would be very awkward just now." He repeated the first part of the question when he shook Her Grace's hand half a minute later.

"Ill? No, thank God, he is asleep," replied Princess Marie, who had just returned from one of her Russian bear-stalking expeditions. This resolute lady (since dead) was then sixty-six years of age.

"*Asleep* when his Emperor had commanded him to be by his side?"

"Tut, tut, *Monsieur le neveu!*" Her Grace no longer smiled. "You have not forgotten the conditions under which the Prince lent his services, I hope? The first of them is that his rank and age be respected. The telegram calling him—a man of seventy-five—to Potsdam at 7 A.M. in midwinter appeared so little in consonance with the

agreement that I thought it bungled in transmission. His Majesty merely meant to ask Chlodwig to have the paper in Potsdam early in the morning, I calculated, and so I brought it to you. It is all right, is it not?"

What could the Kaiser do but put on a good face? "I am sure my gracious aunt always is," he replied, "though these proceedings are unusual, of course, and discipline, you know ——"

"You are joking, William. Such considerations held good with Herr von Caprivi. They are odious among equals. Now will you relieve me of this document?"

"I am a thousand times obliged, *ma tante*" (the Kaiser raised his voice for the benefit of his adjutants, who had remained at the door), "and" (speaking still louder) "I am sorry to hear that Uncle Chlodwig is not well. Moltke will attend you to the palace, and I hope to find you there at dinner. *Au revoir*—we have kept the train waiting long enough. Dona will be charmed to see you."

The Empress was indeed glad, especially when she learned that the meeting with "Willie" had passed off so well. I have the minutes of the conversation from Her Majesty, on whom, by the way, the sarcasm of Her Grace as well as the forced courtesy that characterized the Emperor's remarks were lost.

The Hohenlohes can do these things, of course, but a Miquel, Schoenstedt, Thielmann, a Hammerstein and the rest, have to obey the most outrageous demands unless prepared to be bounced like drunken valets. In winter the gentlemen must be at His Majesty's disposal from 7 A.M. till 12 midnight: in summer he often invites them to report as early as half-past five or six o'clock. If the command appoints the time of the third cock's crow, the poor Excellency has to get up between four and five in the morning, as he must be in grand costume, gold-embroidered

coat, hung with orders and decorations, silk stockings, pumps, knickerbockers and sword, for it takes a good hour to get to Wildpark station.

This is not a daily exercise, of course, for His Majesty likes his sleep as well as any other man; he keeps such early hours only after returning from long journeys, or when pleasure and military exercises make excessive demands upon his time; but even as an exceptional occurrence it is pretty hard on old gentlemen, used to regular hours and overburdened with business.

But if not wanted at 6 or 7 A.M., the Crown's foremost councillors are liable to be dragged from their work, their family circle, or their *siesta* at any other time of the day or evening; they can never call a single hour their own, seeing that William, who regards a report on matters of the highest political significance as a mere *entremets*, to be hastily swallowed between courses of pleasure, or in the intervals of a tattoo, sends for his dignitaries wherever and whenever he finds himself at leisure or in need of some new excitement. The Chief of the Civil Cabinet, Herr von Lucanus, has told me that fully one-half of all ministerial reports are delivered on railway trains, or in the waiting-rooms of stations. "Part of the other half," he said, "is heard by His Majesty in his carriage; after others, he goes himself, making impromptu calls now at the War office, again at the chancellery, or at the Ministry of the Interior."

Herr von Hahnke has regular days for reporting, and he being his right-hand man in all military matters, the Kaiser himself regards the old General's lectures as *quasi* essential, but that notwithstanding, His Excellency has to fight for every thirty minutes of intercourse with His Majesty, just as if he laid claim to time not previously spoken for. If the Kaiser is travelling and Hahnke is in attendance, the

latter delivers his reports at any opportune hour: while William is in his tub, before he gets up in the morning, or after he has retired. If for some reason or other Hahnke is not of the party, he must communicate with the adjutant *du jour* day by day as to the proper time to run up to Hubertusstock, Rominton, Kiel, or other places to perform his duty.

Those are trying days for Prussian and German Secretaries of State, when, as Leberecht Kotze remarked, "it is most appropriate to wear a grass-green cravat." The palace cronies say: "A minister who likes his job will keep an ear to the telephone, one eye upon the clock, and another upon the time-table," when His Majesty hunts in the immediate neighborhood of the Neues Palais, for, if the weather turns out unexpectedly cold, or if His Majesty has the earache, as is frequently the case in winter, he will abandon the chase, and, nothing else being on hand, devote the time to work. Over the wires fly the words: "His Majesty commands Herr Miquel" (Herr *von* Miquel now), "Graf von Posadowsky," "the Minister of Agriculture," or "of Railways," to be at the Neues Palais at a given hour. Or a ring at the 'phone, and the momentous "*Ich befehle*" (the courteous phrase with which William opens every conversation over the wire) throws the state offices on Wilhelm Strasse and Unter den Linden into momentary confusion.

And when their Excellencies, often four or five of them, and the secretaries bearing the *portfeuilles*, arrive at Wildpark, the royal coachman frequently reports that His Majesty has meanwhile changed his mind a second time and has taken to the field, expecting to return in two or four or maybe six or eight hours. So the busy gentlemen trot home again, sometimes to be recalled from Berlin shortly afterward. In the winter of 1896 this happened twice to

Herr von Miquel, busiest of mortals. But, though mighty uncomfortable, it is not the most dreaded experience yet;—the worst infliction is an invitation to accompany His Majesty from the theatre, or some banquet, after ten or eleven o'clock at night, and deliver a lecture on the cars while he softly snores approval.

On such occasions the Emperor usually wakes up as the train comes to a standstill, and, rubbing his eyes, says: "I am entirely satisfied with your proposition, go ahead and press the matter according to the suggestions made;" or, when rising in bad humor: "Leave your report with my adjutant. He shall go over it and submit its salient points anew. Decision will be rendered when I come back from ——. Good-night."

Then he steps glibly into his carriage, and the Minister may retire to the waiting-room to sit down for two or three hours till the night express takes him home.

Occasionally, too, the Kaiser invites himself to supper at one of his Minister's, giving the victim half an hour's time to prepare for his reception, and informing him that he has "commanded" so and so many other gentlemen to be present. One of these invitations I especially remember. It took place on January 23, 1892, while we were all busy preparing for the reception of their Majesties of Würtemberg, set for the next day. On that evening, Countess Keller and myself attended our mistress in the great dressing-room at the Berlin Schloss, trying on a new gown for the projected banquet, and I was about to withdraw when the Kaiser came in to say that he would not be home for supper. "I have commanded Miquel," (Dr.) "Bender," (Baron) "Manteuffel," (von) "Helldorf, and" (Graf) "Douglas to meet me at" (Graf) "Zedlitz's in about thirty minutes," he said. "I want to give them my views on the opposition to the *Volksschulgesetz* and hear

what they have to say. At the same time I will order Miquel to promise me to remain in office. His offer of resignation I have declined, at all events."

"Indeed," sighed the Empress. Her Majesty hated Miquel as the most formidable foe of the pious measure among office-holders.

When, fifteen minutes later, I drove down the Linden, I found that grand thoroughfare alive with people. The chasseurs and grooms, riding in all directions to drum together His Majesty's evening party from palaces, hotels, and apartment-houses, had alarmed the town in the neighborhood of the Schloss, and as my coupé stopped at the Bristol,[1] the mob, recognizing the royal livery, burst into cheers, which, however, gave way to "Ohs" and "Pshaws" when my nonentity, instead of the monarch's august person, hove into actual vision. In front of Count Zedlitz's palace stood at least a dozen policemen, and mounted *Schutzmänner* were riding up and down the left side of the avenue.

I stepped briskly into the hotel, and had no sooner reached my friend's room, when deafening sounds of "Hochs" and "Hurrahs" called both of us to the window.

There was His Majesty in a splendid victoria, a new gray overcoat thrown over his General's uniform, the shining helmet adding to his height. "See how he struts and bids for adulation. He reminds me ——"

I caught my friend, once a *Hofdame* to Queen Marie of Bavaria, by the arm. "Pst! these hotel walls have ears."

Next day the Würtembergers arrived. Parades, processions, receptions, and in the evening a gala performance

[1] Next door to the Ministry of Cult.

at the Opera House. During the principal intermission, tea was served to their Majesties and the ladies and gentlemen of the Court in the *salons* adjoining the royal box.

"These festivities, I trust, do not keep you from your work, William?" the King of Würtemberg was heard to say, as he and the Kaiser retired into an alcove to puff a cigarette.

"Not at all. I settled beforehand the business liable to interfere with my enjoyment of your society."

"Not the *Volksschulgesetz?*"

"The very same. Last night I gave the ultra-Christians to understand that I shall go with the majority."

"But Zedlitz? It means his ruin."

"Fiddlesticks!" laughed the Kaiser; "he perishes in his King's service. Can a Minister die a more beautiful death?"

When, after the performance, he had retired to his study to go over despatches a courier from Stuttgart had brought, the Suabian Majesty said to Captain Bieler, his adjutant: "Every conversation I have with the Kaiser heightens my conviction that he is drifting toward the natural outcome of the exaltation of the almighty ego,—monomania of pride or grandeur. Here is this Zedlitz, on whom he and the Kaiserin have doted so much, and who drew up the new *Volksschulgesetz* after His Majesty's dictation. To-night my cousin informs me that he has thrown him overboard, disowned him and his bill, and when I expressed some slight compassion for the poor fellow, he said, in substance: '*Dulce et decorum est pro rege mori!*' Why, Ludwig never went further."

I am obliged, for the report of this conversation, to my friend at the Bristol, who happens to be a near relative of one of the gentlemen in the Würtembergers' suite. In the utterance nothing surprised me more than the allusion to the suicide of Lake Starnberg, and I said so. The Baroness took me up rather sharply. "I reported the King's words,"

was her piqued retort, "and if they coincide with my own views, so much more credit to woman's acumen. I have not acted *souffleuse* to *König* Wilhelm, I assure you."

I perceived the Baroness was angered by those doubts of mine, born out of a half-hearted attempt to disbelieve what came so near the truth. To humor her, I asked her about the hapless son of her late mistress. At first Her Ladyship refused on the plea of "sparing my patriotic feelings," but consented after a while.

"I was never more struck by the likeness the Kaiser bears to the late Ludwig in manners and attitude," she said, "than when I saw him alight from his carriage a few evenings ago, and I was going to remark something of that sort when you stopped me: the same *grandezza* of walk and gesture, the same studied pose of the head, face and eyes, signifying deep thought, evidently with the intention of impressing the multitude; the resemblance is as extraordinary as it is painful to me."

"Permit me," I said, "there is no gainsaying that our Kaiser is theatrical, but to liken him to a maniac on that account is going too far."

"Pray do not misunderstand me, Countess," said the lady from Munich, "I do not judge the Emperor by exterior signs alone: I take the manifestations of his inner life, his relations to his mother, to his officials, and to his people, his government, his attitude toward and his contributions to art, literature, and what not, into consideration as well. And judging him from every conceivable standpoint, I say and repeat: William II reminds me exceedingly of his late cousin Ludwig. To return to the spectacle witnessed from my window: with just such affectation of dignity was the King of Bavaria wont to walk in state processions, or on other public occasions, during the latter half of the seventies, not to speak of the last years of his life, when his

dementia had become acute. Then the common horde shouted: 'Ah, every inch a King!' just as they do now in Berlin, but those capable of seeing below the surface, and professional men generally, shook their heads and talked of megalomania."

Under stress of these reminiscences I had to confess to myself that, as intimated in these volumes, the Kaiser's actions had often struck me as emanating from a mind not untainted by hereditary disease and not unaffected by prurient egomania.

"My poor mistress!" sighed the former maid of honor to Queen Marie, "what a blessing she did not live to see her grandnephew on the road to destruction! Though she had become a thorough Bavarian, the glory of the Hohenzollerns was forever in her pious mind. Indeed, the holy fervor with which Her Majesty embraced religion during the last fifteen years of her life had its origin in the all-consuming fear that the rise of Prussia's Kings after the French war might have in it the germ of intellectual and moral disaster."

From a diary she kept at Hohenschwangau during the residence of the Queen-Mother there, the Baroness read to me this pathetic appeal, which, she said, was her late mistress's daily prayer:

"If it be true, O Lord, that I was the instrument to visit Thy wrath upon the house of Wittelsbach by transmitting the seed of insanity of my male ancestors, let Thy anger be appeased. In the person of Thy servant Frederick William IV, Thou hast taught the proud Hohenzollerns the transientness of earthly power; the sorry fate of my own sons will forever keep before the royal house of Bavaria the awful punishment excessive pride suffers at Thy hands. May the pious lives of Frederick William's successor and my son's administrator atone for past sins, and may the Wittelsbachs and Hohenzollerns of the future be wise, humble, and God-fearing men."

"Her Majesty then concurred in the opinion of the medical authorities: that her sons inherited the insanity of the Hohenzollerns through her?"

"Indeed she did, poor lady! and this knowledge led her to mortify her flesh and penetrate her soul with ceaseless sorrow," replied the Baroness; "but why do you ask? I thought that was a matter quite generally understood."

"Because," I replied, "the Kaiser has a habit of ignoring that fact, and, instead, offers an extract from a letter the Duchess of Orleans wrote to Queen Charlotte in 1710, and which reads:

"'Grave suspicions are entertained regarding the children of the Bavarian house: the Elector and his brothers are thought to be the progeny of a crazy Italian doctor, named Simoni. Though it is claimed the doctor went no further than to give the Elector and his wife a strong cordial, promising therewith to increase their family, all the children born after the experiments began are suspiciously like the medical person.'

"'The madness of this traitorous Dago,' argues William, 'has been bobbing up in the Wittelsbachs time and again, and King Otto is the latest victim of the curse.'

"I know, of course, in a general way, that before the advent of Frederick William the Fourth's niece, the Wittelsbachs were a sound-minded race," I said, in conclusion, "but was there really no hereditary taint on the father's side? You who lived for a life-time at the Munich Court are in my eyes a better authority on this question than historians."

"I have known Ludwig the Second's grandfather and father," answered my friend, "and in my younger days met people who remembered Max Joseph quite well. All were eminently sane men, and of Maximilian's seven brothers and sisters, only one, Princess Alexandra, exhibited signs of derangement at a critical period of her

life, when religious exaltation got the better of her for a time. King Maximilian had half a dozen illegitimate children remarkable for intelligence,—several of them are alive to-day,—but those borne him by his Prussian wife—Ludwig and Otto—went stark, staring mad. So, you see, it is out of the question to either deny or ignore the curse this intermarriage with a Hohenzollern has precipitated upon the Wittelsbachs." And drawing near to me, as if afraid that her words might be overheard, the Baroness added: "The one not utterly hopeless point of this tragedy is a circumstance moralists have so much deplored, — the perverted sexual taste of the kingly brothers: Ludwig died, and Otto will die, childless; so my poor mistress's prayer seems to have been answered in one respect at least."

Queen Marie was the daughter of Prince William of Prussia, son of Frederick William II and uncle of mad Frederick William IV. Her mother was a Princess of Homburg and a blood relative of Marie's paternal grandfather. The Queen was born October 15, 1825, and died May 17, 1889, having passed many years in acute melancholy.

This latter fact, as well as the Prussian-Bavarian kinship itself, has been carefully covered up for tens of years. Only once, in 1885, I remember reading in the *Vossische Zeitung* some slight allusion to these data, but as the chief of the political police threatened immediate prosecution for *lèse majesté* if the offence were repeated, the subject was dropped. And that happened under the first Emperor, when the present Kaiser was seemingly even further removed from the throne than the Prince of Wales.

Had the old Emperor a presentiment of coming events? Did he, with the wisdom of age, perceive the analogy between his grandnephew and grandson?

There is every probability that he did, for the medical authorities had already decided that Ludwig might have escaped the curse of insanity for many years to come, had power not been thrust upon him so early in life.

If Kaiser Frederick had lived for twenty or thirty years longer, the catastrophe now threatening William II might have been averted, for persons with their minds hereditarily tainted may, nevertheless, shape their destinies to some extent. By refusing to feed their inordinate appetite for self-aggrandizement, by rigidly declining to give way to the egotistical impulses consuming them, they may retard the progress of the disease, may even lead it into harmless channels. Perhaps William would have learned to curb his inherent proclivities, if his judgment had been allowed to mature. As it was, both grandnephews of Frederick William IV decided upon the opposite course.

Suddenly elevated by his father's untimely death,[1] Ludwig gave himself up to the most extravagant enjoyment of kingly puissance, taking the mediæval notions of the "*roy Soleil*" for a standard and acting in a general way as if his petty kingdom were an empire of the vastness of Charlemagne's realm. And the ink of the pamphleteering literature called forth by his tragic end was not yet dry when William plunged into the same abyss, strutting, head tossed in the air, blustering.

And has he not kept it up ever since with true madman's perseverance, braving the ridicule of the world, throwing sound counsel to the winds, and critics, ever so humble, into gaol?

The manner of the Kaiser's intercourse with his Ministers has already been noticed. "Unprecedented," said the

[1] Maximilian died in his fifty-first, Kaiser Frederick III in his fifty-seventh year.

average reader, no doubt. Pardon: there is an example of such conduct. Ludwig II treated his Excellencies no less brutally. Like William II, he made it a point to live away from the capital the greater part of the year, thereby increasing his councillors' labors, and, like his cousin, he compelled them to chase after him now to Nymphenburg or to the Bergschloss, to Herrenchiemsee and Linderhof, again to his Renaissance, his Rococo, or Chinese palaces. They were "commanded" to follow him to the highest peaks of the Alps and to the lakes, into the mystic depths of his forests, or to his "blue grotto,"—always in great gala, delivering reports in the open with bared heads, the dictum: "I am the master, you the menial," being continuously kept before their eyes. And is not William's habit of interrupting Hohenlohe's or Miquel's lectures on government affairs by a "Look at yonder antlers,—I shot that deer then and there," branching off into a rambling account of some every-day hunting experience, but a repetition, in another form, of Ludwig's practice to break the monotony of Minister von Lutz's reports by declaiming a hundred verses or so from one of Schiller's dramas? And the Kaiser's hankering for absolutism, his assumption of omnipotence when as head of the *Reich* he is really the most restricted of monarchs,—no sovereign at all in the extreme sense of the word,—bears not this impotent bragging an ominous resemblance to Ludwig's hallucination of being a mighty potentate, autocrat of a hundred millions of slaves?

Professor Quidde, of Munich, sold in June, 1894, one hundred and fifty thousand copies of his pamphlet, "Caligula: a Study of the Insanity of Cesarean Power," which suggested a parallel between the carryings on of Tiberius's successor and the German Emperor of to-day. Many of the examples given in the *brochure* were striking; with true native profundity, Herr Quidde even unearthed instances

in Roman history that might pass as counterparts of the dismissal of Bismarck and of the squandering of the old Emperor's fortune by William II; but, though Caligula is dead these eighteen hundred years and despite the fact that the majority of Quidde's analogies were rather far-fetched, the Germans proved so intent upon the promised explanation of their Kaiser's eccentricities that they allowed the publishers to pick up a fortune in an incredibly short space of time,—seventy-five thousand marks for Roman history (brought up to date) within four weeks! Mommsen's and Treischke's books do not yield half so much in a decade. All told, half a million copies of the pamphlet were purchased; in other words, every intelligent citizen of the Fatherland either bought or borrowed it, and all read it! Is it possible to conceive a more telling proof of the nation's distrust of William's sanity? And if the great mass of the people is moved to suspect that his much-fawned-upon *Genialität* is a disease of the nerves, how much more so are we members of the Court holding daily intercourse with His Majesty, we who are intimately acquainted with his own and his family history and gorged with the gossip of all royal establishments of Europe, past and present?

The reading public sees from time to time paragraphs in the papers setting forth the Kaiser's aspirations to emulate Frederick the Great. Though anachronistic, there is nothing discreditable in such an ambition; yet members of the household, who, like myself, see William grimacing for half-hours at a time before a mirror hanging by the side of a life-size portrait of Frederick, cannot help feeling deeply apprehensive that behind all this there is more than vain-gloriousness.

At the breakfast given in honor of Prince Augustus of Saxony, in October, 1895, the Kaiser surprised his guest by an invitation to accompany him to Potsdam, where he

would show him a portrait of Frederick that resembled him, the speaker, in every line. His Royal Highness is a polite man, and, after beholding Pesne's historic canvas, representing the King in his thirtieth year (about 1743), with round cheeks, luxurious brown hair done up in a queue, and his breast encased in a silver cuirass, he told the Emperor many complimentary things, but from his manner it was evident that he was as little impressed with the alleged likeness as the rest of the company. And small wonder: there is no resemblance whatever between "the last of the Kings who finished off forever the trade of King" and the most highfaluting of his *epigoni*. As to His Majesty's particular claim, that he has "the eyes of the victor of Rossbach," one need but quote Mirabeau in refutation. In his "*Histoire secrète de la cour de Berlin*," the shrewd French observer says: "Those orbs" (of Frederick) "fascinated one with seduction, or with terror, at the bidding of his great soul." That there exists a resemblance between William's boyish features and those of Frederick, in another painting by Pesne, "*Friedrich und Wilhelmina*,"[1] as the Kaiser pretends, is equally absurd.

As a matter of fact, the monarch of the end of the eighteenth century and his successor of the end of the nineteenth have as little in common, outwardly and inwardly, as the second Ludwig of Bavaria and the fourteenth Louis of France had, and that William, ocular disproof notwithstanding, insists upon imagining himself Frederick's counterpart, is but a phase of his monomania of grandeur equivalent to a hallucination of which his late cousin was possessed.

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[1] The original hangs in the castle of Charlottenburg. It represents Frederick at the age of four, beating a drum, and walking at the side of his sister, afterward the Margravine of Baireuth, attended by a Moor.

Insane reverence for *le roy Soleil* was among the initial symptoms of Ludwig's derangement. The splendid, though personally dirty, *grand monarque* was his Bavarian Majesty's ideal, as Frederick the Absolute is William's demi-god. With the progress of Ludwig's disease, his Louis the Fourteenth fallacies kept pace: from imitating that most brilliant of French kings in all but submission to the other sex—he would rather be "mastered" than *maitressed*—it finally became a fixed idea with him that he had become merged in the person he adored, that he was not the grandson of a little Duke, owing his diadem to the "upstart" Napoleon, but a descendant of Louis the Saint.

In like manner William's Frederick-worship began by easy stages. That, as a boy, passionately fond of the army, he should admire a relative who was one of the greatest generals the world produced, is only natural. That, grown to man's estate, he led every public effort to honor Thomas Carlyle, the architect of his ancestor's fame in the English-speaking world, is commendable. But lo! he clambers onto the high horse himself which yesterday no one could ride but the man who, singlehanded, whipped the whole of united Europe! The admirer has grown into an imitator, the copyist will be a rival soon. "I am a composer like Frederick." "Like the great King, I never wear anything but uniform." "My hatred of England is only equalled by the contempt Frederick the Great bore to the nation of thieves and traffickers," etc.

The attempts to establish a facial resemblance to Frederick, as well as the oft-claimed intellectual one, have been going on for three years, and of late, spurious pictures supporting this theory are coming to light with alarming frequency; almost every one of the small Court balls are

costume-festivals nowadays at which the Emperor appears in the military dress of Frederick's period, generally as the late King's aide-de-camp; Frederick's marches are played in the Schloss and palace on all occasions, appropriate or not, and as a wind-up the Kaiser usually turns *Kapellmeister* to demonstrate to the professional leader "the spirit in which the composition was conceived," and "how Frederick the Great would have it executed if he were here." And last, but not least, His Majesty has revived and enforces with unwonted energy in such matters the Cabinet order of 1888, commanding visitors at Court to appear in the "Rococo costume[1] Frederick loved so well," while at the same time the uniforms of the palace guards are gradually changed to resemble those *en règle* in the latter half of the past century. Now and again William informs his titled household that he has been "graciously pleased to grant" this or that regiment or battalion (it is always one with which he comes into much personal contact) "grenadier caps *à la* Frederick," "kettle-drums *à la* Frederick," or "bugles *à la* Frederick."

"Frederick held that only the nobility is capable of personal honor,"—this is William's excuse for calling "*vons*" and Barons and *Grafen* "the flower of the nation."

When, in the beginning of October, 1897, Prince Hohenlohe, by threat of resignation, prevented the Kaiser from offering armed assistance to the Queen of Spain (to counteract the possible intervention in Cuban affairs by the United States), His Majesty talked for three days incessantly of "Frederick, who was his own chancellor and

[1] When first issued, this order called forth so much protest and ridicule that the Kaiser, *par force*, allowed it to become a dead letter for the next eight years.

parliament—of the living, puissant Hohenzollern-initiative, always setting the dogs of war loose before his enemies had time to get over their surprise.

"But Frederick is not dead, he lives here" (striking his breast), "and his mailed fist will clutch somebody's throat sooner or later," and so on *ad infinitum.*

Perhaps it will. But when it does, a *paranoia*[1] verdict, such as that which discrowned Your Majesty's granduncle, in October, 1857, and your cousin, in June, 1886, will assuredly stalk in the wake of that act.

The present chronicler has neither the technical knowledge nor the material at hand to attempt a complete parallel of the cases of Frederick William, Ludwig, and William. That a marked similarity existed between the mental conditions of Queen Louise's son and the Bavarian grandson of William of Prussia is notorious, and that many of Ludwig's idiosyncrasies survive in William II was already shown; but I should be the first person to credit these signs of derangement to the account of mere eccentricity if they were exceptional manifestations instead of links in a chain that seems to drag the Kaiser irresistibly to his doom.

Alas! that there is such a chain, and twice alas that it should be the one that drew Ludwig below the weeds of the mountain lake!

The King of Bavaria's case was diagnosed as exaltation of self-esteem and of craving for grandeur, coupled with limitless egotism and heightened by impulsiveness. He was found to be deficient in judgment, a spendthrift, curious for knowledge and hard-hearted withal; that is, he possessed singularities so prominent in the Kaiser that

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[1] Paranoia, confusion of the senses, was the medical term used to characterize the condition of both Frederick William IV and Ludwig II.

their summary strikes one, *nolens volens*, as an estimate of William's character.

Examples of the Kaiser's insane big-headedness are numerous throughout the pages of this volume, and the present chapter has furnished some interesting analogies between certain acts of volition on the part of both royal cousins, but nothing short of a methodical comparison of their lives and deeds as kings and men will explain the Kaiser's case. This I will endeavor to give on the basis of my own observations regarding William's sayings, his actions and vagaries, placed in juxtaposition to an account of Ludwig's character and his life and death furnished by the Munich *Hofdame*.

To begin with the symptoms of monomania of grandeur: Ludwig's borrowed *l'état c'est moi* theories were no more absurd than William's attempts at out-Muscoviting autocracy and playing the Jack-of-all-trades are.

I remember His Majesty coming down to "second breakfast" one afternoon—it was either the 27th or 28th of October, 1894—while the question of who would accept the Chancellorship after Caprivi's dismissal was still pending and the whole country was torn up by doubts and misgivings. "There is a pretty state of things," he cried, and all of us expected to hear it announced that Uncle Chlodwig had finally refused,—"here is a pretty kettle of fish! This city of ——" (naming some small Rhenish town) "petitioning to build sewers and proposing to empty, according to plans submitted, the refuse into the river just above the chief bathing establishment. Of course, nobody in the Home Office saw the terrible mistake, and it took me four hours to correct the drawings and suggest a better plan."

Bothering about the sewage of a one-horse town while the Empire is quaking in the throes of a crisis is a phenomenon

of rapid thought, or else an anomaly born of the passion to play Providence.

The former Minister of Cult, Count Zedlitz, was selected by William for his important office, despite the fact that he had never enjoyed the benefits of a course in college, and that the most extensive sphere of administration his new Postmaster-General, Herr von Podbielski, a retired cavalry officer, ever presided over was a stable full of hussar horses, for which he bought forage and whose manure he sold at advantageous prices; yet the Kaiser thought the one a fit superior of a Virchow, a Mommsen, and Helmholtz, and the other splendidly qualified to succeed the great Doctor Stephan. The why and wherefore he explained a dozen times before all the Court: "because they will receive their instructions from me." Still, Richard Wagner was drummed out of Munich because Ludwig desired to make him his Minister of Finance.

That a General can do everything is one of the Kaiser's pet phrases, yet ever since his accession to the throne he has bounced generals by the hundred, year after year. It happened at a dinner in June, 1897, that he asked one of his adjutants to name the generals dismissed during the last three months. Thirty were counted, whereupon His Majesty said, with a grin: "That is what I call juggernauting old iron in right royal style," and the senior of the pensioned officers was only fifty-six years of age! During the further course of the meal the Kaiser opined that his grandfather would have gained even more kingdoms, dukedoms, and principalities if he had had for Chancellor a General, instead of a mere civilian (Bismarck). There is more suspicious acceleration of thought for you, the activity of William's mind, quickened by hallucinations. This symptom the Kaiser has in common with the late Ludwig, as he also appears to have inherited

Frederick the Great

that hapless monarch's splendid memory. The Munich Dame of the Court tells how long and successfully her late master deceived the unlearned by feats and well calculated tricks of memory, which many accepted as a heaven-born gift instead of as *stigmata*, of evidence of the morbid organization of his brain, and the history of most persons insane from and with Cesarean power records similar phenomena. Tiberius, Caligula, Mohammed Toghlak, and Ivan the Terrible—all were afflicted with this same pseudo talent. All of them were ready talkers, knew whole regiments of soldiers by names, and could reel off fifteen hundred or two thousand words of technical slang on any given subject. Indeed, Ludwig's and William's granduncle, Frederick William IV, was the rhetorical wonder of his time—for a German.

Whenever I hear William rail against this Prince (he is the only Hohenzollern one may designate an ass in Germany without fear of prosecution), I have the impression that the hatred His Majesty bears the defeated of 1848 is grounded on the knowledge of how much he is like him in political rhabdomancy, fustian style of language, outward religious sentimentalism, and general inconsistency of mind. I fully believe he recognizes at least the last of these fallacies as a weakness peculiarly his own, and to counteract it allows his inborn severity and inclemency full sway.

"What can our brother admire in that wretched Sultan?" asked the Crown Princess Sophie of her sister of Lippe at the family meeting in Friedrichshof in June, 1894.

Victoria, who might have been a vassal of Abdul-Hamid if Bismarck had not interfered and if her first betrothed, the late Alexander of Battenberg, had lived,—Victoria, not a very bright person, passed the query on to her husband. "He must know, the Kaiser tells him everything."

"William says he likes the Grand Seigneur as the embodiment of absolutism, as a ruler prepared to rule at the hazard of seeing one-half of his people dead on the ground, that the other half may learn to obey," spoke Adolph, impressively; "that he has told me a dozen times. 'If Frederick William IV had possessed but a spark of the spirit that lives in the so-called sick man,' he once said, 'I should be monarch in the true sense of the word to-day, though Berlin gutters might have run with blood for weeks in succession during March, '48.'"

The Duchess of Sparta covered her face with both hands. "Horrible!" she sighed.

"But His Majesty's true convictions," whispered Baroness Reischach—"think of the Frankfurt speech."[1]

"Nonsense," resumed the Prince of Hesse, in an effort to efface what his all-too-truthful brother-in-law had said, "our *beau-frère* Willie merely flatters the Padishah to obtain His Sultanship's permission to visit the imperial harem the next time he goes to Constantinople."

I am rather inclined to think that the Kaiser's desire to smoke a *tschibuk* with Abdul-Hamid and a thousand Circassians, with white and black and olive and red women, kadyns and odaliks, is as strong as ever, and that his Turkish policy is in part dictated by this passion; but that Prince Adolph correctly reported His Majesty's sentiments with respect to ideal kingship was demonstrated three years after the family reunion in Empress Frederick's castle, namely, in the summer of 1896, when the Kaiser presented Abdul-Hamid with a chromo for living up to his conception of "rule by the grace of God."

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[1] The Kaiser said on August 16, 1888, at Frankfurt-on-the-Oder, "he would rather see his forty-two millions of Prussians dead on the battlefield than give up one foot of ground gained by the Franco-German war."

His hands red with the blood of forty thousand murdered Christians, the successor of the Prophet received, in June of that year, a colored photograph representing the imperial family in a loving group,—Kaiser and Kaiserin and all the children. "My master," our Ambassador, Freiherr von Saurma, was ordered to say in his presentation speech, "hopes that this simple souvenir may be acceptable to Your Majesty as a token of his affection and eternal friendship," massacres or no massacres.

Twice Baron Saurma telegraphed Prince Hohenlohe for further advices on this piece of diplomatic business; his first telegram seemed to indicate that he looked upon the picture as a belated Easter gift, or something of the sort. On being reassured of its up-to-dateness, he wired he would rather resign than carry out so degrading an act after what had just happened in Constantinople; but Hohenlohe, afraid of the terrible scandal sure to ensue, persuaded Saurma to withdraw his threat, and so the presentation took place with due ceremony to both Majesties' profoundest satisfaction.

"Women do not understand these things," was the Emperor's gruff rejoinder when Her Majesty objected to having her likeness and that of the children sent to the "wholesale murderer of Christians." "What do women know about being consequential? These Armenians were rebels, and my friend, the Sultan, treated them as I would treat a mob opposing my authority, any day."

"But," pleaded Her Majesty, "Herr von Marschall tells me it was primarily a religious riot, the Mussulmans falling on the Giaours and killing them off like so many sheep."

The Kaiser shrugged his shoulders and smiled. "I am shepherd of the Lutheran Christians in Prussia," he said, brutally; "those in foreign lands must take care of themselves."

And a year and a half later he sent Prince Heinrich on "the new crusade, to uphold the Cross and punish the slayers of Christians in China." But, then, His Majesty never dined with the Tientze, the Son of Heaven, and that worthy's Viceroy, Li Hung Chang, when he visited Germany in August, 1896, utterly failed to fulfil William's expectations.

While insanity of power usually instils an overweening passion for the military in its victims, Ludwig differed from his cousin, the Kaiser, in the point of bellicose proclivities. During the last ten years of his life, he scarcely ever donned uniform, but, though trotting and marching and countermarching to the tune of drum and fife had no allurements for the disciple of Richard Wagner, he utilized the army as eagerly as William for purposes designed to heighten the lustre of his personal appearances.

My friend tells me that the drive-ways and footpaths of the Munich royal park, *Englischer Garten*, were fairly alive with soldiers, gendarmes, police, and detectives when the King was at home. The public was given to understand that the less seen of it the better, and ladies and gentlemen of the Court, known to the officials, had to submit to petty annoyances in the way of identification, warnings, etc., at such times as well as the common rabble. Ludwig never rode or drove out except *à la* Shah,—cavalry in the front, at both sides, and in the rear.

"Perhaps," I suggested, "your poor King suffered from monomania of suspicion, or exaltation of awe."

This the *Hofdame* denied. "Only during the last twelve months of his life that phase of insanity appeared to trouble him." The Baroness told me of several visits she paid the King in his lonely mountain castles on behalf of her mistress. "Sometimes," she said, "I secured permission to gaze upon the all-highest face for a second or two,

that I might be the better able to make a minute report to Her Majesty. On other occasions I saw Ludwig, unbeknown to him, as he drove past in his gilded carriage over lonely roads regularly patrolled by pickets of good-looking horsemen attired in the most fetching uniforms. It was evident the mad monarch could not do without the royal pomp of *soldateska*. Even after his misanthropy had degenerated into positive hatred of mankind—such hatred that he was unable to look a person in the face—he would not miss his regiments, to him the representatives of kingly puissance."

Heretofore Ludwig's soldier-worship has been explained solely on immoral grounds, with divers references to Nicomedes-Cæsar; the above interpretation, which research has proved correct, brings it nearer home by identifying it as one of the features of insanity of power. In Czar Paul, one of William's relatives on the side of his father's mother,[1] this element of monomania of grandeur overtopped the rest of his crazes, but even then the son of Soltikof and Catherine did not go further in his military tyranny than William does. Paul is reported to have passed most of his time on the drill-ground; so does the Kaiser. His biographers tell us that "his mind was incessantly occupied with petty regulations about costumes and appearances;" that he was "continually inventing new dresses and accoutrements for his soldiers." You should hear William preach on the importance of such warlike measures as the length or shortness of a sabre-strap, the pointed or broad form of heels attached to the dancing-pumps of young lieutenants commanded to Court balls, or

[1] The mad Paul of Russia was the grandfather of Empress Augusta, consort of William I. Many of Czar Paul's freaks are revived by William II.

listen to his tirades against setting the buttons of an undress frock in a straight line,—themes we people of the Court hear discussed morning, noon, and night. Moreover, count, if you can, William's regulations and orders about the cut of pantaloons, the facings of pelisses, and the impression tan boots are sure to make on African savages, and you will think better of that pseudo-Romanoff strangled "because his lucid intervals became shorter week after week." Over the taxpayer's feelings, who pays for the Kaiser's pettifoggery, his endless innovations and alleged improvements, that improve only the bank accounts of army purveyors and are often dropped as suddenly as they are introduced,—over the sentiments of this beast of burden, steeped in penury, indifference, and political hysteria, I will draw the veil.

Paul, we are assured, was crazy enough to enforce his clothes regulations even upon civilians, A.D. 1796. And a hundred years later, the Kaiser ordered that all station-masters in Prussia must provide themselves with a specially designed dress-suit, including a toy sword and a plumed hat, to wear when he passes through their town. As the outfit costs from three to four hundred marks, and the majority of the officials receive but three or four times as much per annum, resignation or starvation, or both, became the order of the day.

That His Majesty tells the ladies of his household what they shall wear on festive occasions is tyrannical, but not wholly unreasonable, seeing that he imagines he owns his *entourage* body and soul, but other women, even relatives of His Majesty, will not take kindly to his expensive suggestions. Seldom does a ball or state occasion pass that there is not a gap in the line of our royal dames; now the Hereditary Princess of Hohenzollern sends "her regrets," again Princess Aribert goes to bed twenty-four

hours previous to a costume festival at Court. Even the Hereditary Grand Duchess of Baden declines time and again to help ruin her husband by reckless extravagance of toilets, such as the Kaiser demands his guests to engage in. As a matter of fact, William's passion for having everything his own way is entirely incompatible with reason. There is no art outside of the narrow circle approved by him, no stage and no state craft, unless conducted on rules laid down by him to actors, to parliamentarians, to diplomats. His soldiers, his children, the women of his household and of society, his officials and men friends, all must be dressed, or must masquerade, according to his varying moods.

On returning from a review, the war-lord seldom speaks of the success or non-success of the exercises; that he caught Lieutenant von X. Y. wearing an overcoat an inch shorter than the regulations stipulate, or a sub-officer attired in pantaloons of his own, instead of those furnished by the regiment, is of far greater importance in the Kaiser's eyes. For these eyes reflect the mere outer film of things correctly enough, but do not penetrate below the surface because the mind directing them works too rapidly to weigh the relative importance of things.

At the close of the manœuvre season of 1897, Count Haeseler, the General upon whom Moltke's mantle is supposed to have descended, said to a Reichstag deputy: "Those mimic battles arranged by His Majesty were magnificent, each ending like that between the fabulous lions, whose tails alone remained on the field; but as to the burial of the dead (supposing the Kaiser's theories were followed out), I cannot, for the life of me, conceive who would attend to it. Let us assume, for argument's sake, that the nations of the *Dreibund* march into the field under the chief war-lord's guidance,—Germans and Austrians side by side, Italians covering the rear. Then let

two or three battles be fought, such as we experienced in Bavaria this summer: vast masses of foot launched on top of each other, *tambour battant*, horse and artillery swallowing hailstorms of bullets with gusto, as if they were *Erbswurst* soup! Why, unless our Peninsular friends turned gravediggers one and all, pestilence would drive them back. It is my humble opinion," concluded Count Haeseler, with a sarcastic smile, "that the dead never entered into His Majesty's calculations."

In his book, "The Blot Upon the Brain," William W. Ireland, M.D., Edinburgh, says: "They" (the victims of insanity of power) "are easily beaten in the field by generals who prefer what is essential to what is superfluous."

CHAPTER XVIII

That both royal cousins were possessed of this passion for mummery (uniforms, liveries, masquerades in and out of season),—King Ludwig sometimes carried it so far as to dress his servants as Indian Rajahs, and sit down to supper in the open while the thermometer was near the freezing-point,—this analogous turn of mind in Frederick William the Fourth's grandnephews may perhaps pass for accidental, be the relation of this craze to insanity of power ever so well founded,—more convincing are similarities in the lives of Ludwig and William that show a concurrence of opinion in the line of the higher emotions.

"During the night of October 15, 1885, half an hour after midnight," says my Munich friend, with a reference to her diary, "I was called up from bed by the night-watch rapping at my door. With my senses benumbed by sleep, I understood only these words: 'Majesty wants you.'

"'Is Her Majesty ill?' I cried, much alarmed, while pulling on my slippers. By that time my maid had arrived. 'The King has come from Linderhof and wants to see the Queen,' she said. 'He had the candles lit in the reception-room by his own servants, and is impatiently walking the floor wondering why Her Majesty keeps him waiting.'

"Lieschen told me this while we were running to the Queen's bedroom. In ten minutes our mistress was dressed. In five minutes more I heard the noise of wheels in the court-yard below: the King was driving away.

"I hastened down-stairs to accompany Her Majesty back to her apartment. She looked awe-struck, but did not speak a word. Only when I had put her to bed again, and was about to take my leave, she said: 'Marguerite, I do not want you to retire with feelings of misgiving. The King brought no alarming news. He talked of nothing but the weather, and at the moment of departing added: "To-day, I believe, is your sixtieth birthday. Accept my royal felicitations." '"

To compel a sickly old woman to get up in the middle of the night for the pleasure of haranguing her with platitudes,—who but a madman could conceive so preposterous an idea! "Yet look at the date," resumed the Baroness: "October 15, 1885! Only eight months before Ludwig's tortuous career came to a horrible end."

The speaker recalled numerous instances of the King's cruelty to his mother: how he forced her to vacate the palace she liked best; how, by ostentatious display, he caused Queen Marie to doubly feel the loss of power and influence; how, by his parade of hatred and contempt for her relatives, he wounded her sentiments and lessened her popularity in the land,—three examples out of a hundred, that remind one strangely of the Kaiser's treatment of the Empress Frederick.

That William dispossessed his mother from the home where she had spent the happiest years of her life,[1] that he gruffly denied her the poor pleasure of assuming representative social duties during Auguste Victoria's frequent

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[1] Immediately after Emperor Frederick III died, William assumed possession of Castle Friedrichskron, where his parents had lived for over thirty years, and to efface every sign of his father's residence there he dropped the name and reinstated that designated by the builder, Frederick II; namely, Neues Palais.

pregnancies ("If my wife is ill, I will be Kaiser and Kaiserin both," were his words), that he is the leader of Anglophobia in Germany and the abettor of hundreds of printed insults to the Empress Frederick, are facts as notorious as they are pitiful.

I have heard these and similar events discussed; I have seen them wept over in the royal family. "It is his confounded bad heart," voted Prince Albrecht. "Ay, this sort of thing is dictated by meanness, common, everyday cussedness," decided the Hereditary Prince of Meiningen.

An anonymous letter, purporting to echo the opinion of a renowned foreign authority on affections of the sentiments, diagnosed the case as the result of power-drunkenness, and went on to state that, as Mohammed Toghlak, the megalomaniacal Sultan of India, was pleased to kill his brother and exalt his mother, so it was William's *bon plaisir* to give a lift to Prince Heinrich (occasionally) and abuse his parent.

While unwilling to adopt this extreme view, I must confess that the Emperor's habit of signing his letters and telegrams to his mother and to his wife and children, "Wilhelm, *Imperator, Rex*," smacks decidedly of insane exaltation of self-esteem.

With chronicling stories of His Majesty's excessive pride, a diarist of Samuel Pepys' industry could be kept busy ever and anon; to-day the General Order issued by the *Kommandant* of Potsdam announces, at the top of its columns, that His Majesty is "graciously pleased to sometimes drive a dog-cart" (follows elaborate description of vehicle, horse, and livery, which latter is different from the ordinary one), "he handling the ribbons himself and the Empress sitting *dos-à-dos* with the groom." "Officers and men," continues the paper, "are cautioned to take

notice of the above fact and to be careful to execute the prescribed evolutions when meeting the imperial party, under penalty," etc. To-morrow the Kaiser narrates at supper how he whisked Count Gessler off Bornstädter Feld and ordered him to keep to his room for three days, "because his spurs were not of the approved pattern."

"*Graf* Gessler?" queried the Kaiserin,—"Gessler of the Cuirassiers and of my Body-guard?"

"The same. And why did I do it? I might not have been so hard on him, had he not passed me the other day without saluting when I was in my dog-cart."

"Surely, he did not recognize our new livery."

"He ought to recognize his Emperor through a three-inch board! And, by the way," added His Majesty, "I learned the name of that captain of Dragoons who failed to *make front* before us near Babelsberg Sunday morning; it was Freiherr von ——, garrisoned at ——, and commanded to Berlin to serve on the General Staff. I found that out by sending a description of the delinquent to the colonels of all our dragoon regiments. He is on his way home. Berlin is no place for a donkey of his calibre."

In the winter of 1895, Lieutenant-Colonel von Natzmer came near losing his head as commander of the Third Guard Lancers on account of the stupidity of a trooper who, being sent on *galopin* duty in the course of some exercises, mistook the Emperor for a captain of infantry, named Kahn, William wearing no shoulder-knots or other insignia on that occasion. Only by offering to distribute photographs of His Majesty in a variety of uniforms among his men did Natzmer save his bacon. The case of under-officer Mohr, of the First Foot Guards, and how he became a sergeant, is also interesting. Mohr was never suspected of "carrying a field-marshal's staff in his knapsack," but

nature fitted him with eyes capable of much contraction and dilation of pupils, so that, like a member of the genus *Felis*, he can see in the dark. That stood him in good stead when he ran across His Majesty near the Berlin Stadt Schloss one wintry evening. Recognizing the war-lord at a distance of several paces, he promptly *made front*, sounding an all-submissive "Good-evening, Your Majesty."

William was elated. There was true loyalty. This fellow, if he had half a chance, would live up to the maxim that a soldier will recognize the Kaiser through three inches of oak. "Who are you, my son?"

"Under-officer Mohr of the First Guards, at Your Imperial and Royal Majesty's command."

"Only an under-officer? But you have a sweetheart, I reckon?"

"At Your Imperial and Royal Majesty's command,—yes, the daughter of *Feldwebel* ——"

"Then go to your room, sew on the stripes, and report to your future father-in-law and to the young woman as His Majesty's sergeant. Right about face, forward, march!"

Mohr (marching "as if he were going to throw away his legs," as the phrase goes): "Thanks, a thousand humble thanks! God save Your Imperial and Royal Majesty."

Another and more dangerous form of the Kaiser's excessive vanity and egomania shows in the current prosecutions for *lèse majesté*. For this offence sentences amounting to some three hundred years of imprisonment are imposed by Prussian judges from January to December, and as the courts of the allied German states and statelets follow the lead, it is calculated that, on this score alone, as many years of imprisonment are annually meted out in the Fatherland as there are days in the year. Accordingly, three thousand five hundred years—twice the time of the Christian

era, lacking a few paltry centuries—were wiped out of the lives of some eight to nine thousand of his subjects since William assumed the crown, the list of culprits embracing both sexes and all classes of society. And for what?

In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred (I quote from public records) for the heinous crime of impeaching the Kaiser's aptitude as a composer, as a ruler, poet, diplomat, or ship-builder; as a conqueror, orchestra-leader, or expounder of the Monroe doctrine; as a sportsman, as God's anointed, as a painter, strategist, novel-writer, circus-director, or lawgiver; as advocate of duellos, as a constitutional king, stage-manager, or absolute monarch; as playwright, huntsman, infantryman, cavalryman, family-man, or maid-of-all-work. The prosecutor's license is practically limitless; but there are still some knots in his rope that admit of lengthening the line. To let no guilty one escape, it is stipulated, for instance, that insult to Majesty superannuates only after five years. Thus a discharged servant, a faithless friend, or malicious employer may prosecute you in January, 1898, for a remark you dropped (or did not drop) in December, 1893, or, if he prefers, he may blackmail you for that length of time under threat of informing the state's attorney. And that frequently happens in the Fatherland.

As to the personalities of the culprits, I will quote from one of the daily bulletins:

"The wife of a feudal land-owner in Pomerania was 'sent up' for nine months because she remarked that the Emperor might kiss her foot.

"A registered prostitute in Altona got four months' imprisonment for a similar offence, though her invitation was of a more comprehensive character.

"Eugen Richter's sally, made in the Reichstag some time ago: 'Yesterday the German Emperor and fifty of the noblest of the nation

ran for two hours after an old sow,' a Breslau editor clipped for his paper and inserted under the head of 'Court News,' adding date and place. The joke cost him his liberty for nine months.

"In September, 1897, a popular music-teacher, Fräulein Hedwig Jaede, in Stettin, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for having, in 1893, denounced the 'Song to Ægir' as a piece of rubbish."

The poor girl addressed a petition for pardon to my mistress; but, being afraid to face her husband on this score, the Empress asked Herr von Levetzow, the former President of the Reichstag, to present the matter.

This is her report of that gentleman's interview with the Kaiser:

"Herr von Levetzow had no sooner broached the case, than the Emperor interrupted him. 'You think the laws against *lèse majesté* are too rigidly enforced,' he cried. 'Why, you astonish me! That there are so many prosecutions, only proves that the sentences imposed are much too light. If they were not, those outcasts that dare to point the finger of scorn at God's anointed would be afraid to open their mouths. Believe me, as soon as I can find a *man*, a *real man*, to take charge of my Chancellor's office, I will have him prepare a bill increasing the punishment for traitors of this sort.'

"Of course," concluded Her Majesty, "after that, poor Herr von Levetzow had not the heart to press the petition for pardon."

"Increasing the punishment for *lèse majesté?* and at this early date!" exclaimed Deputy Richter, when the non-success of the venture was reported to him by one of his intimates at Court,—"and Ludwig II proposed a similar course of action only during the last two years of his lunacy! When he sentenced some lackeys to be knouted to death who had laughed on seeing him gallop around his

library, snorting and neighing like a horse; when he ordered that his Minister of Finance should lose both eyes for refusing to advance him twenty millions to finish his fairy castle of Neuschwanstein, or when he decided that an adjutant, who had failed to secure a lover for him, was to famish in the 'black hole' below the foundations of Linderhof, the King was undoubtedly mad, and only a madman could have expected to see such commands executed in 1885 or 1886! During the earlier stages of his illness, even acute monomania of pride and vanity could not induce him to ask severer punishment for victims of the existing laws."

Meanwhile, the increased punishments have come to pass without resort to legislation. Acting upon His Majesty's suggestion, the courts are of late condemning men and women for criticisms of governmental acts *in which the Kaiser takes a special interest,* for protesting against the Sedan celebration on the score of peace propaganda, for instance, and the lists of offenders comprise, besides members of the aristocracy and prostitutes, little boys and girls who, on account of tender age, are otherwise exempt from criminal prosecution.

"It is William's sense of divine appointment that makes him look so sharply after criminals of this sort," is my mistress's stereotyped apology when members of the family bring up the matter. Poor lady! she is not always happy in the selection of her similes. The above one, for instance, she used once too often; namely, on the occasion of a gathering of relatives at the Neues Palais, in October, 1897, when the Court was laughing over an act of imperial clemency in the case of a sixteen-year-old nurse-girl from Coblentz, who had been condemned to nine months' imprisonment for saying she would like to sleep with the Emperor.

The Kaiser and His Six Sons

William, by the merest accident, learned of this, and at once pardoned the precocious youngster.

"She has probably seen me during the manœuvres in Rhineland," he argued, curling his moustache, "and devil take me if I blame the wench. Ill-bred as she is, that was *her* manner of expressing admiration."

The *finale voluntary* to this was a decision of a Breslau judge, viz.: that a certain Wilhelm Schultze, because he had wished himself in the Hereditary Prince of Meiningen's place (place stipulated), and had said so openly and shamelessly, was not punishable for libel under the law. Argued the judge: "Schultze is an ignorant fellow, and, having great admiration for Princess Charlotte, expressed that feeling after the manner of his ilk. *Ergo*, I discharge him, with a warning."

These are exceptions, and not particularly edifying ones, from a cruel rule that recalls the mad vagaries of the crazy Rudolph II,[1] and does more to undermine royalist sentiment than even the Kaiser's speeches. A friend of mine in the Ministry of Justice has kept a record of the sentences imposed for criticisms of the "Song to Ægir." He counted three hundred and eleven years, seven months, and fines amounting to nine thousand marks, during 1893, 1894, 1895, and 1896. Can you blame His Majesty's adjutants for listening with straight faces to his side-splitting remark: "Now you will hear my magnificent composition," when, at a banquet in Mohacs, Hungary (September, 1897), the programme announced the song to the

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[1] Rudolph II, Emperor of Germany,—his grandmother was the crazy Juana of Spain,—reigned from 1576 to 1612. He was insane on the subject of his imperial dignity, as well as on other subjects, and countless innocent people lost their lives, their liberty, and their fortunes for alleged lack of respect for this crowned madman.

sea-god, who in reality was a miserable landlubber. "The Austrians and Hungarians laughed to kill themselves," reported one of the participants, "but we knew better. If any of our crew had dared to smile assent, he would have been given occasion for kicking himself sooner or later."

In connection with *lèse majesté*, it should not go unnoticed, however, that there are one hundred and forty-eight English square miles in Germany where man, woman, and child may say of the Kaiser what they please, this sanctuary being known as Reuss, short for Elder Branch, while the Almanach de Gotha designates it as Reuss-Greitz-Schleiz-Lobenstein-Eberswalde, with several villages yet to be heard from. The potentate of this district is Heinrich XXII, a cousin of the Heinrich who, during his wedding-night, was overheard to apostrophize his wife *à la main gauche*, the circus-rider Loisset: "Oh, Chlotilde my only!" whereupon the former queen of the arena responded with delicious pathos: "Oh, Heinrich my twentieth!"

As old Kaiser Wilhelm allowed this story to be published throughout Prussia, the Reuss *tyrannos* at once determined that hereafter no form or manner of blackguardism directed against the Hohenzollerns should be liable to prosecution in his territory, and to this resolve His Grace has nobly stuck all these years (since 1879).

Newspapers seized for insult to Majesty in all the rest of the twenty-five states and Free Cities, constituting the common Fatherland, are freely circulated in Reuss, *ligne aînée;* its 53,787 inhabitants, and visiting strangers too, may shout all they like about William's idiosyncrasies, and *Serenissimi'* dog-tax records abound in such invectives as "Wilhelm" and "Preuss."

A feature of William's character that recalls some of the darkest days of his late cousin's declining years is the

hatred he bears to his servants. Those one thousand ill-paid menials in showy liveries, hanging about the royal residences, are but a "contemptible thieving horde" in his eyes,—"rascals whom to know by name would be to honor them." When talking to his people,—needless to say it is always to give a command or ask a question,—the Kaiser invariably addresses man or woman: "You, there!" and none of them ever heard that cheap courtesy: "Good-morning" or "Good-evening" from the master's lips.

My Munich friend tells atrocious stories of the "Chinese ceremonial" *en vogue* at Linderhof and Herrenchiemsee from 1880 to 1886,—how the King's servants had to scratch at the wood-work to announce their presence at the door ——

"Why that?" I interrupted.

"Because the King could tolerate a lackey only if acting the dog that His Majesty thought him to be!" The Baroness continued: "His valets had to approach him crouching on their stomachs,—no one wearing the royal livery dared look the King in the face, and, finally, Ludwig even thought the tone of his voice too good for his people. So he conceived the plan of writing his orders on slips of paper and, spitting on them, pushed them under the door for those outside to pick up."

Of course, nothing like it has yet been introduced at the Neues Palais and Schloss, but Ludwig, too, worked himself up to the frenzy of servant-beating by easy stages. During the initial phases of his malady, he would order a servant who had displeased him to be removed to some lonely manor-house or lodge, there to continue for the rest of his days at an inferior salary and without ever having an opportunity to gaze upon the royal presence again. The same happened to the Kaiser's old body-chasseur Rau, among other royal employees,—Rau, who caught

His Majesty's coat-tail in the carriage-door,—and to Rau's successor, who, on a particularly warm winter day, asked whether His Majesty required a lap-robe, instead of placing it in the coach without troubling the master, and to *Haushofmeister* (Major-domo) von Jurns, because the royal yacht Alexandra could not be got ready so quickly as the Kaiser demanded.

Like all victims of morbid impulsiveness, a symptom going hand in hand with megalomania, the Kaiser thinks himself above the restrictions of space and time. If he wants a thing, he imagines he has but to say so in order to procure it, whether it be a shirt-stud dropped under the table, or a historical painting for which a dozen square yards of canvas have just been nailed up.

And this condition of the imperial mind tends to more people's ruin than all the rest of His Majesty's crazy notions, save, perhaps, the one compelling persons to make themselves invisible on demand.

The palace regulations stipulate that no servant shall be found in the Emperor's apartments during His Majesty's presence in the castle, sleeping hours excepted. Now it happens sometimes that His Majesty rises at the fifth hour, instead of the seventh or eighth, as announced. What are servants, suddenly confronted by the news of the master's approach while engaged in cleaning, to do? To drop work means dismissal, and to be seen by His Majesty carries the same penalty with it; so they run, simply run, trusting to good luck that the evidence of disorder in the rooms may not be noticed.

My maid, who was formerly attached to the royal chambers, says it is a curious spectacle to see the wood-carriers, firemen, scrubbers, dusters, window-cleaners, and polishers tumble over each other in a wild scramble to elude the master's eye. There must be no noise, no spilling

of water, and certain corridors and staircases are to be avoided at all hazards. Suzette herself hid once for three-quarters of an hour in an empty stove,[1] the only place of safety reachable when the Kaiser came upon her as she was about to enter his room. And this sort of hiding-place has since become popular in the palace, though it is apt to ruin clothes and house-dresses, especially the latter, of white and blue calico, with white aprons and ditto cuffs and collars.

"But why did you not crawl out as soon as His Majesty had passed?" I asked.

"Because the Kaiser remained in the room to which the stove belonged, and the slightest bit of noise would certainly have brought him round to my prison gate. And then—*Kopf ab*" (off goes my head), "as *gnädige Frau* knows."

I may be allowed to interpolate here that Prussia rejoices in a peculiar law permitting master and mistress to correct their domestics by an occasional sound thrashing. The statute is an old one, and the Diet has striven to abolish it ever since it, the legislative body itself, struggled into existence. But all attempts met with most vigorous opposition by the government. When the proud privilege of kicking a flunky, or boxing a maid's ears, is up for discussion, the bench of the Ministry is always occupied to the last man, whilst royalist orators give ready support to the official claim that the ancient law is one of the pillars of social order and that its abolishment means nothing short of anarchy.

Why the state should go out of its way to uphold this cruel and barbarous statute is not easily conceivable to

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[1] In the Neues Palais the stoves are lighted from the corridors, and have immense openings.

outsiders. Surely, the times are past when it was thought consistent with the dignity of the King of Prussia to have salt-laden pistols at his elbow in order "to hurry up" sluggish pages. Frederick William I followed that custom, and in one and the same year lamed one man for life and blew another's eyes out. That happened one hundred and fifty or more years ago. Ancient history, is it not? But history repeats itself. The great Frederick and his puny successor, when punishing servants, never went further than to disfigure their faces by blows with walking-sticks, or the butt end of a sword, yet Karl of Prussia, granduncle of the present Kaiser, revived Frederick William's practices and occasionally killed a menial or two,—a fact which led one of his brothers to remark that, if not a Prince, Karl would surely die by the halter. All of which shows that the Hohenzollerns are dangerous masters; that cruelty runs in the family, so to speak;—as a matter of fact, terror stalks ahead of William, his people flee, and hide in fire-places and niches to escape his eye: they do not care to expose themselves to violence; and what guarantee is there against a caning, or worse, when the sight of a servant walking up a staircase or through a corridor suffices to throw the master into a violent passion?

"*Die verdammten Hausdiener*" (those accursed flunkies) "lounge everywhere about the palace; Eulenburg, you must keep them in the kitchen, or cellar, where they belong," is His Majesty's every-day complaint to his grand-master, when at home.

"May it please Your Majesty, no man or woman enters the residential parts of the palace unless on special duty."

"Details, my dear Eulenburg, do not concern me, and I will not have them thrown up to me. I tell you, and repeat, that the sight of the lackey is distasteful to me, and it is your business to rid my environment of eye-sores."

There was "Mother Anna," the wood-carrier. One morning, in the winter of 1889, having deposited her bundle of fire-sticks in the Kaiser's antechamber, she caught a glimpse of His Majesty through the half-open door. He was sitting at his desk, reading a newspaper. "Lord," thought "Mother Anna," "there is God's anointed in his dressing-gown! Who would have thought that my poor old eyes would ever be blessed by such a vision. And," she said to her mates later on, "I stood as still as a mouse, just like a miserable little mouse, and peeped and peeped with frightened yet grateful eyes."

And while the old women were still gossiping, one of the secretaries from the Court-marshal's office came up to inquire which of them had been on duty in the imperial apartments that morning.

"I," said "Mother Anna," falteringly.

"Well, then pack your traps and get your wages. His Majesty will not allow such as you to spy into his affairs."

Empress Frederick took care of "Mother Anna," giving her work on Bornstädt farm, otherwise she might have famished, for she was seventy when turned away from the Neues Palais.

But there are rows with the servants even for lesser cause,—about a cigar-stump, for instance.

It was, I believe, in February, 1896, when His Majesty warned the Empress and the members of the *entourage* against "the pilfering lot of hirelings that infest the palace."

"Nothing is safe," he cried, adding, with a show of severity: "I ought to turn my rooms into a fortress, as did the lord of the Hradschin" (imperial palace in Prague).

In the afternoon Her Majesty sent Herr von der Knesebeck to ascertain when, and of what, the Kaiser had been robbed. Hear his report: "On Sunday night, after the

smoker, His Majesty put the stump of an *echte*" (real) "Havana cigar into an ash-tray in his small toilet-room; to-day" (Wednesday), "when he desired to finish it, it was gone, and all inquiries among the attendants, *Kammerdiener*, wardrobemen, lackeys, and chasseurs, proved unsatisfactory. His Majesty therefore concluded that one of the footmen stole the stump, and an investigation is under way."

It lasted three days. Then the *corpus delicti* was found—ruined beyond hope of retrieval—at the bottom of a refuse-barrel. After seeing it on the dresser for two mornings in succession, one of the chambermaids had thrown it away.

"The *Stummel* looked so shrunk up," said the reckless hussy, "I thought His Majesty did not want it any more, and, fearing a reprimand for allowing dust-catching things to lie around, I put it into my pail and cleaned the ash-tray."

The Kaiser likes popular applause, huzzahs, and *hochs*, but the hurrahers must keep at a distance. Unlike his royal granduncle and his cousin of Bavaria, he is not a misanthropist, not yet, but his contempt for everybody beyond the pale of his own set—"*das verdammte Publikum*" he calls them—increases more and more, particularly as to women.

One year after another Her Majesty and Count Eulenburg experience greater difficulty in persuading the Kaiser to permit the customary royal procession at the Opera House ball, held during carnival, and even if he consents to "mix" with the "*damned public*" on that one occasion, he usually backs out at the last moment. In 1895 and 1896, William chose to emphasize this contemptuous treatment of his Berliners by persistently keeping to the rear of the royal box, so that very few of the thousands ready to smile upon him got a chance to do so. Does not

this remind one of mad Ludwig's saying: "The people do not *deserve* to see the King"?

Quite frequently the Kaiser's unapproachableness has led to most disgraceful scenes. So it happened on Whit-Monday, 1894, that the Kaiser refused to attend the celebration of the Lehr und Wehr battalion, opposite the Neues Palais, unless *das verfluchte Publikum* was pushed further back, whereupon imperial adjutants, Court and House marshals, and generals galore scrambled off in all directions to have the order attended to. At the bidding of the then *Kommandant* of Potsdam, Herr von Bülow, mounted *Schutzmänner* and soldiers on guard used their steeds and muskets freely, and next day our grand-master received over a hundred complaints from ladies of the aristocracy, reporting that they had their feet trampled on by grenadiers and their hats and faces brushed by horses' tails,—eventualities not on the programme so far as their invitations indicated.

"These hysterics," as he called the protests, afforded William much amusement and pleased him the more, as they seemed to back up his oft-expressed opinion that women are apt to become nuisances on public occasions.

"I will have none of them by and by," he said, and forthwith gave orders that the number of permits admitting members of the weaker sex to the parade-grounds should be gradually lessened. To the spring parade of 1896, held in the Lustgarten adjoining the Potsdam Stadt Schloss, only one hundred officers' wives and daughters were invited, these to have their seats on the terrace.

The review was set for eleven o'clock, but most of the favored ladies arrived two hours earlier, whereupon they were told by a police lieutenant, standing at the Schloss gate, that His Majesty had given orders to keep the terrace clear until the very moment he appeared on the grounds.

Royal servants then took charge of the women and conducted them into a vault-like subway, at the further end of which was a small door leading to the terrace over dirty steps.

In this dark, damp, and ill-smelling cellar the ladies were locked up until two minutes to eleven, when they were set free to select places for themselves. I was standing behind Her Majesty and little Princess Louise at one of the lower windows of the Palace, in full view of the extraordinary spectacle that now ensued. Their Excellencies and Ladyships came panting up the steps, pushing and jostling, pawing and clawing each other, to gain precedence or room. Here a dowager countess raised her skirts above the knees to climb over a row of chairs, there the young wife of a commanding general tiptoed along the stone rampart, her train over one arm and exposing an incredible expanse of hosiery. *Freifrau* von L——'s lace petticoat was torn into tatters in her efforts to win an advantageous place,—there was no such reckless display of limbs and linen since Borel unbalanced his ladies for "*La Bascule.*" The First Guards, standing opposite, shouted with laughter. Her Majesty was furious. Turning to her brother, she said: "After this you will agree with me, I hope, that the Kaiser's dislike for woman's attendance at military spectacles is well founded. I blush for our soldiers, compelled to witness such a sight." Poor lads! they deserved pity, for the Emperor, enraged at the "*damned public's*" behavior, continued the drill half an hour longer than usual.

But the Kaiser's *animose* notions find expression also in measures of political significance. So he changed the district of Rominton, where he has a hunting-box, into an Eveless Eden by buying out all the farmers who were either married or employed female help, and the once

populous village of Theerbude is nowadays half deserted in consequence. Still, a few petticoats remain there, and His Majesty had a new carriage-road built, enabling him to reach his residence "without running the gauntlet of gaping wenches."

There are many pages in my Munich friend's diary reporting similar measures instituted, or proposed to be instituted, by the late King Ludwig; but the analogy between the cousins is most striking in the infatuation for the stage, common to both, and in the revelations of their superlative egotism,—the passion to satisfy their appetites, which was Ludwig's, and is William's, only aim in life. The theatrical bee in their bonnets seems to be the same that buzzed in the head of the late Frederick William IV, when mysticism had not the upper hand in that quarter; but, whether inherited or not, it is one of the stock fixtures of insanity of power. It cost the Romans under Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, and Heliogabalus thousands of millions. Ivan the Terrible was an actor of no inconsiderable power, and even those poor imbeciles, Charles II and Don Carlos, offsprings of megalomaniacs rather than power-drunk themselves, were much devoted to the spectacle, though probably preferring a "horse with its bowels gored out, or a Jew writhing in the fire," to high tragedy.

At first, Ludwig was a patron of the drama of the most legitimate order: the classics of German literature appealed mightily to his sense of the ideal, and their foremost interpreters became his companions. One of them was the tragedian Rohde, the other the Wagner singer Nachbaur. They were granted the unheard-of privilege to *tutoyer* the King, but there was nothing in Ludwig's relations to these men that shunned the light of day. The King's *faible* for the theatrical approached

the abnormal only when his enthusiasm for Richard Wagner degenerated into a cult and when his admiration for the romantic Kainz addressed itself to the person, instead of the artist. As Ludwig's brain became more clouded,—that is, as his insane big-headedness increased and his perverted tastes pushed to the front more brazenly,—the former patron of "Egmont," the "Maid of Orleans," and "Marion De Lorme" threw classics to the dogs. He would have only such plays on the royal boards that depicted his own dreams of greatness, that showed him (or the historic types he thought he impersonated) as the embodiment of earthly power, in the rôle of conqueror, lawgiver, or wrathful divinity, as arbiter of the world and in similar parts. And to obtain the dramatic products wanted, he hired men to join together comedies and tragedies from anecdotes, court scenes, and incidents which he himself furnished ready rabbeted and pared down, as are the walls and roofs and chimneys and window-casings of those Norwegian wooden houses, sent parcelwise all over Europe.

The Kaiser's taste in matters theatrical has moved along similar lines of idealism, followed by self-glorification. To begin with: Goethe, Schiller, Hebbel, Grillparzer, then Wildenbruch, Lauff, Büttner.

During the first four or five years of his reign, His Majesty tried to trundle the Thespian chariot alongside his political and diplomatic tally-ho coaches. His Intendant of the Royal Play and Opera Houses, Bolko Count Hochberg, the same who once came near being brother-in-law to Herbert Bismarck, was a good enough Major of the Reserves, but as to competing with Oscar Blumenthal, Ludwig Barnay, and the late Pollini,—that was entirely out of the question. "I will let him run the financial end, and look after the artistic department myself," said His

Majesty, shortly after the Court left off mourning for his father and grandfather. And he was as good as his word. He read plays, or had them read to him, attended rehearsals, and helped some of his—Prince Wilhelm's—ex-favorites to parts to which they were by no means entitled. The programmes were his, the insults offered to modern playwrights were of his making, as was the annual deficit.

In 1890, Ernst von Wildenbruch, known as the author of a tiresome but ultra-patriotic play, "*Die Quitzows*," sprung into sudden prominence at Court. The Kaiser had at last found a laureate "capable of interpreting Brandenburg-Prussian history in dramatic form;" through him he would "talk to his people, recalling the Hohenzollerns' past greatness and foreshadowing deeds of future grandeur."

Wildenbruch became a regular visitor to the Kaiser's study. They planned and declaimed together; the author wrote tirades by the yard after the Kaiser's dictation, and William corrected and improved the manuscript. So "The New Master" was born, a drama glorifying the Great Elector and incidentally suggesting that the Emperor was a man of the same stamp.

It was the first step on the inclined plane. Brandenburg history—written by Brandenburgers—now became the watchword. For, of course, "Wildenbruch is one of us,"[1] else how would he come by his genius?

"At the head of the Wagnerian movement there walked, as is fit, an insane King" (Nordau),—William and Ernst, arm in arm, lead the *avant garde* of German imperial letters.

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[1] Wildenbruch is a grandson of Prince Louis of Prussia and of Henrietta Fromm. The name has previously been borne by the natural offspring of Prussian Princes. He died in 1909.

In the annals of our Court, the winter of 1896–1897 lives as the dreadful period of the Emperor's pregnancy with "*Willehalm*," "*Willehalm*" being a festival play, conceived and written by the literary *Zweibund* in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of William I (March 22). There was not a member of the upper household who did not know large portions of it by heart long before its production, so incessantly were the words drummed into our ears. "*Mein Herr Grossvater*," "*Wilhelm der Grosse*," were the sole topics of conversation by Kaiser and Kaiserin, and His Majesty persisted in giving whole pages of monologue and bits of the dialogue at all times, either to point out passages written by himself, or to illustrate the beauty of Wildenbruch's versification improved by him.

The last ten days preceding the festival William divided between attending rehearsals and instructing the chief performers privately at Count Hochberg's Berlin residence. In consequence, my mistress saw little of her husband, save at bed-time, when, she told Countess Brockdorff, he was still full of the grand drama and the trouble he had had with the actors and actresses to make them understand their parts.

There was Fräulein Lindner, for instance, cast to play the "Soul." She had actually smiled at a certain passage of her monologue. "That made the Kaiser wild," declared Her Majesty. "'Fräulein Lindner,' he cried, 'by an expression like that, you are liable to spoil my whole play. The German soul, I want you to understand, is grave, stern, tragic almost. Try to picture it as it is written on my own face. Then you cannot help being successful. And as to your costume, it must resemble a train of thought,—it must be an uninterrupted, flowing line. There must be neither girdle nor corsets.'"

"She will look like the soul of a miller's wife, turned into a big bag of flour," said Princess Feodore of Meiningen, who has inherited some of her mother's wit and all Her Royal Highness's inclination for mockery.

"*Willehalm*" was performed, and seven hundred and fifty of the Kaiser's one thousand invited guests fled before the drama was half over. This festival play, dedicated to the simplest of kings, proved nothing short of Byzantinism run wild. As Louis XI, "least majestic in all his actions, his manners and his exterior, a most ordinary man, dressing like the meanest of the people, who gave audiences seated on a broken-down chair with a dirty cur upon his knees,"—as Louis was the first ruler—not a Roman Emperor—to whom the title of "Majesty" was accorded, so had Bismarck's and Moltke's old master divine honors thrust upon him, though certainly the last to have claimed, deserved, or accepted them.

"Tiresome and grotesque," said the critics; "*meschugge*" (slightly touched) was the dictum of *vox populi*, that did not know how near it came to be *vox Dei*. But His Majesty's friends, who had followed the genesis of this play, shook their heads sadly, and many had resort to the trite phrase: "I told you so." In the Kaiser's deliberate aim to place William I on unsurpassable heights of greatness, they recognized the craving for self-glorification that threw Prussia into political chaos in the fifties and bankrupted the Wittelsbachs twenty-five years later.

"His *Herr Grossvater* be blowed,—it's the present anointed who clamors for recognition as a demi-god," wrote a certain Russian diplomat to St. Petersburg, and I doubt that the situation could have been more tersely expressed. The anonymous correspondents, too, who had become notably reticent since Madame Herbette's departure, revived their notorious practices, quoting whole pages

from Quidde's "Caligula" in support of the theory that Cesarean madness sat upon the throne of Frederick the Great. Here are some of their deadly parallels:

"Caligula used to call his senators up from bed that they might see him dance. 'Loloki' keeps us all night at the Opera House to hear him declaim about his grandfather's impossible virtues and about the superlative statesmanship of Bismarck's employer, charging us a fat entrance fee in addition."

"Caligula was so crazy on the subject of the theatre that occasionally he took part in the performances himself. 'Loloki' has not yet appeared on any stage, save informally in the concert-room, as band-master, but he turns good actors into spiritless automatons by his drill and interference, and he writes plays, which is worse."

"Caligula owned a thousand different showy dresses, and changed his garments half a dozen times a day. 'Loloki' prides himself upon his arsenals full of different uniforms, and wears out a dozen valets per day dressing and undressing him."

"Caligula was inordinately fond of variety performers, especially indecent ones. Whether he ever commanded army officers and Princes to appear before him in parts such as 'Loloki' ordered the Hereditary Prince of Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha and officers of the Guard Fusileers to assume at the smoking concert in the Fusileers' mess during the winter of 1896 is doubtful. Suetonius" (the biographer of the first twelve Cæsars) "gives no news on that point, but then there were probably no Sisters Barrison in the first half of the first century, so that Caligula missed the trick of seeing a royal Prince disrobe and ride a horse woman-fashion."

"The Roman Emperor appointed old soldiers to the most important civil offices. Was Podbielski ever anything

The Kaiser and His Generals

besides 'an old soldier' before 'Loloki' made him Postmaster-General?"

"Caligula gave all officials of his Court military rank. 'Loloki' has turned all his goldsticks into martinets."

"Caligula forced parents to witness the execution of their children. 'Loloki,' in oft-repeated speeches, prepares his soldiers for the feast of shooting down or running through their parents, brothers, and sisters."

A witty criticism of the Kaiser's ability as a playwright was passed by the Hereditary Princess of Hohenzollern in a letter to a friend:

"J'ai vu *Der Neue Herr*
Hélas!
Et après *Willehalm*
Hola!"

In September, *Willehalm* was followed by another festival play, which the Kaiser wrote in conjunction with Captain von Lauff. Produced at Wiesbaden, in honor of the visit of their Italian Majesties, the drama elicited but pathological interest, where it called not for guffaws or pious, deferential wonderment. And according to some members of the Court society permitted to see William's third (or fourth) yet unpublished play, "*Deutscher Michel*," that is another changeling out of wind and bombast, sired by egotism, only more loose-jointed, more rambling, more audacious in the treatment of the "I."

CHAPTER XIX

George III found a louse on his plate at dinner and ordered his whole household shorn, men and women alike; that was brutal, was tyrannical, and every tyrant has in him the making of a complete egoist. In the case alluded to, the egoist turned madman every few years. Yet, when the royal George first uttered the maxim: "Having no wish save the prosperity of my dominions, I must look upon all who would not heartily assist me as bad men as well as bad subjects," no one had the temerity to say that his excessive love of self was proof of a deranged mind. Frederick William IV thought exactly like George III, but had not stamina enough to act accordingly. His grandnephew (Ludwig) was his *alter ego* in that respect, and his surviving grandnephew (William), improving on the British ancestor, adopted Caligula's mottoes: "There is but one master, one king," and "Let them hate me, if they but fear me."

The last phrase he used frequently in his public speeches during the first half-dozen years of his reign; after the appearance of Quidde's pamphlet, he dropped both, to avoid odious comparisons, and went back to George's petulant screech: "I wish you well; therefore, if you do not agree with me, as scoundrels and traitors I will flog you into obedience."

Long years of acquaintance with the Kaiser have convinced me that he is morally irresponsible for many of his

countless acts of assumption, injustice, incivility, and browbeating. He cannot help them. Taking interest in no one but his ego, and viewing society (so far as it does not directly contribute to his momentary comfort) as something not to be reckoned with, he seems to be unconscious of the existence of any one besides himself.

When he goes riding with his wife, and some accident to her mount or harness delays Her Majesty on the road, William proceeds to his destination in the most unconcerned fashion, taking his gentlemen, gendarmes, and grooms with him; neither does he lessen his pace to give Her Majesty a chance to catch up with the party. "Dona" has her own gentlemen and ladies. Let them look after her.

Maybe the Kaiser admires a woman he meets in society, or the wife of a newly-appointed official. He will say so without reserve, extravagantly praising her good points, if she has delicate hands or fine bosoms. That the Empress, upon whose good graces a woman's position at Court largely depends, will turn against the favored one, strike her name from the visitors' list, and give her the cold shoulder, if ever afterward they meet, does not concern him in the least. He seems to think that honor grows again, like hair.

There was *Fräulein* von Böcklin, for instance, who came up to the Kaiser's standard of beauty as the central figure of some *tableaux vivants*, arranged for the benefit of the Paul Gerhard *Stift*, in January, 1891. How he raved about her hands and feet, her arms and shoulders. Photographs of the young lady adorned his study, private bedroom, and the audience-chamber, but *mademoiselle* herself never crossed the threshold of the Schloss or Palais, though Count Eulenburg proposed her for years successively at every festive occasion. Auguste Victoria simply put her foot down, and *Fräulein* von Böcklin's social success was

a thing of the past. Vilma Parlaghy, the painter, experienced something similar. The Kaiser had advertised this woman like a circus, had given her gold medals in opposition to the findings of the Committee on Fine Arts of the Berlin Academy, and, finally, in the winter of 1892–1893, invited her to paint his portrait. She came to the castle, primed for her *chef-d'œuvre*, but what a surprise! The Empress appeared at her husband's side at every sitting and watched madame so closely as to make it impossible for the artist to do herself justice. I have to laugh every time I think of the astonished face Vilma made when I preceded their Majesties into the studio.

That the Kaiser's egotism leads him to regard all state resources as his personal property has already been mentioned. Everything is his. "My army," "my navy," "my ports," "my fortresses," "my funds" (meaning the state treasury), "my minister of war," "my chancellor," are expressions we hear as often as "my horse," "my boys," or "my speech." In the first week of August, 1896, when His Majesty suddenly returned from his Northland trip, an officer of the *Feldjägers*, whose name I have forgotten, was invited to second breakfast. "*Sehr schneidig*, this Herr Lieutenant," said William to Her Majesty across the table, "but he came near ruining one of my torpedo-boats in trying to catch up with the Hohenzollern, on the way from Maeraak to Bergen. If he damages another of my vessels, he will have to pay for her."

Last year I heard William say at Wilhelmshöhe to his former teacher, Dr. Kius: "Your chief aim must be to inoculate into the rising youth the sentiment that the greatness of the empire depends upon the progressive strengthening of my navy."

There are certainly many reasons why old "Uncle Chlodwig" should be allowed to retire; but who, outside

the inner circle, could guess the chief cause of his retention in office? "The Prince Regent of Bayern and the Kings of Würtemberg and Sachsen assume the right to be heard before I select my new Chancellor,—*es ist zu toll*" (it's downright madness). "Next, His Grace of Pyrmont will undertake to run my government." This is His Majesty's own explanation, which, of course, does not efface the better and more likely one set forth in a previous chapter.

In conformity with his ideas of omnipotence, the Kaiser made his brother-in-law (Adolph) regent for the demented Prince of Lippe, though the King of Sachsen warned him during a visit paid to Berlin *incognito* that the appointment could not stand, the Count of Biesterfeld being the next agnate.

"I told Albert," said the Kaiser to Auguste Victoria afterward, "that Adolph went to Bückeburg upon my orders, that he stays there with my will and consent, and for the rest—I gave him his crown; woe to him who touches it."

This last sentence the Empress read to Countess Brockdorff from her diary; she had put it down as something particularly fine and original, and was much astonished to learn of its historic origin with the old Lombard kings.

"At any rate," she said, recovering from her surprise, "Victoria and Adolph have now something to live on" (the civil list of the principality amounts to nearly a quarter of a million of marks), "and the Kaiser will not be bothered with their finances in the future."

There is still another reason for His Majesty's interference on behalf of Adolph. Prince Frederick of Meiningen, brother-in-law of William's sister Charlotte, married against the Kaiser's wishes, selecting for *beau père* this same Count of Biesterfeld, and persuading the Diet of

Meiningen that his offspring by this lady are perfectly legitimate and capable of succession. Consequently, if the Hereditary Prince of Meiningen should die, the Kaiser's sister would be nobody, and precedence would pass to the *née* Biesterfeld. *Hinc illæ lacrimæ.*

The King of Sachsen was as good as his word, and, as arbiter of the Lippe dynastic imbroglio, decided, in July, 1897, that Adolph must quit. One of the Kaiser's adjutants tells me that, on receiving the news, His Majesty burst out: "I wish Bismarck had never been born. He was the person who persuaded my *Herr Grossvater* against annexing Sachsen in 1866. And now comes this ingrate, whose fortunes rest upon Hohenzollern generosity, and decides against *me*, his sovereign by right, his Kaiser."

Count Biesterfeld, as is customary, announced his assumption of the Regency to the head of the Empire in a formal despatch abounding in high-sounding phraseology and assurances of royal courtesy. Ten, twelve days passed without an answer. Then came hurrying over the wires this message:

"BIESTERFELD, Bückeburg: *Dank für freundliche Mittheilung.*
"WILHELM, *Imperator, Rex.*"

In the Queen's English: "Thanks for kind information," a phrase that in our tongue is much used in a derisive sense, the word "kind" being synonymous with "gratuitous" in this connection.

"But," said Princess Charlotte, "our sister Victoria is scratching along on a Prussian major's salary just the same" (Prince Adolph of Lippe is Major of Hussars, garrisoned in Bonn).

William's egotism even betrays itself in his generosity. He was fairly beaming with enthusiasm when he informed the Court, after the Paris Bazaar fire, that he sent his

check for ten thousand francs to the Relief Committee. "All the world will talk about it,—can man do more for a national enemy?" spoke his eyes.

In the evening, even before the newspapers had the story, a despatch arrived from Count Philli: "They will haul Your Imperial and Royal Majesty to Paris in a thousand triumphal cars in 1900!" But when, a month afterward, Würtemberg was devastated by floods, the Emperor had neither money nor words of sympathy for the stricken ones. And for the military aid, furnished to the inundated Silesians in the fall of 1897, the towns and villages were promptly taxed: so many pioneer troops, so many marks for food, forage, extra pay, and railway fares. The communes protested: "Extra pay is out of the question. What is the use of having soldiers, if they do not come to the citizens' succor freely and without claims for remuneration."

"Don't dispute," wrote back the Minister of War; "the men did extra work, they deserve extra pay." But if five hundred men are ordered to improve His Majesty's hunting-grounds, as they did at Rominton last year, that is called military "exercise," and compensation is out of the question.

In August, 1895, the Court moved to Berlin, and it was given out simultaneously that His Majesty's friend, an English gentleman of the highest connections, would spend some time with us; namely, the Earl of Lonsdale, or Lord Lonsdale as he is usually called, the same with whom the Emperor stayed at Lowther Castle the previous summer. Ah, the stories of English munificence revived by this piece of intelligence! Our Master of the Horse, *Graf* Wedel, estimated that the pleasure of entertaining the Kaiser damaged His Lordship's bank account to the tune of a million marks, or more, and Count Eulenburg, who was not very enthusiastic about that English visit,—while

riding to the hounds near Penrith his hunter threw him, and poor Augustus has been suffering from headaches ever since,—even Eulenburg had only words of praise for the noble Britisher, sentiments which the other gentlemen of His Majesty's suite, Adjutant-General von Plessen and Count Metternich, the latter a Councillor of our London Embassy, fully endorsed. They all expressed a willingness to make it as pleasant as possible for Lord Lonsdale, the only dissenting voice being that of the Empress, who could not forget that Lonsdale had introduced her husband to so many beautiful English women whose praises he sang for weeks after his return.

Lord Lonsdale's invitation was for the Pomeranian manœuvres; but he was to come a week before their commencement, to get a taste of German town and country life. Theatre parties, parades, excursions by land and water, were planned for the amusement of the great man, and everything pointed toward a round of pleasant days up to a few hours before His Lordship arrived. On that morning my mistress asked me to inspect his rooms and report to her any possible improvement that the House-marshal or housekeeper might have overlooked. I understood that the Englishman was to have Prince Henry's old quarters, and thither I went. To my utter astonishment, I found a number of servants engaged in covering up the furniture and removing flowers and plants.

"What does this mean?" I asked of the head footman.

"His Excellency has just sent word that the lord will be lodged at the Hotel Bristol. So these rooms are to be closed up again."

"Impossible," I said. "Are you sure there is no mistake? Her Majesty knows nothing of it."

"*Gnädigste Gräfin* may believe me that we asked not once, but half a dozen times. Think of the *douceurs* we

are going to miss. It will be a loss of a thousand marks to us footmen alone."

Her Majesty did not know what to say to my information. However, the reception accorded to Lord Lonsdale by the Kaiser and Kaiserin was pleasant enough.

At the Sedan parade, a few days later, we women of the Court looked in vain for Lord Lonsdale. He was to be in the Emperor's suite, but in the long line of glittering uniforms no foreigner was discernible. Finally, one of our Anglomaniacs discovered His Lordship in the second or third row, halting at some distance behind the Emperor, the King of Würtemberg, and a host of small-fry Princes.

At the state dinner, held in the White Hall at 5.30 in the afternoon, the same distinction of rank was ostentatiously upheld; His Lordship had to sit down with a lot of cheap goldsticks and councillors, and when he came to look over his invitation for the grand tattoo in the *Lustgarten*, he found it entitled him to standing room on the Schloss terrace. There the proud Englishman stood with some of his friends from the banquet and a lot of officers' wives and daughters, listening to the music. I never would have believed it, had I not seen him myself. If he had raised his eyes, he could have seen their Majesties of Germany, of Würtemberg, and of Saxony on the balcony above, holding tea-cups in their hands. We were having supper in the state apartments.

I beckoned the House-marshal, Baron von Lyncker, to my side. "Was His Lordship not invited?"

"No."

"But he is our guest."

"Y-e-s," drawled the Baron; "still, here we have several Kings and no end of Royal Highnesses to look after."

"Surely, the Kaiser will be furious at the oversight."

"No oversight, I assure you. If His Majesty had wanted him to tea, as well as the banquet, he would have said so. He went over the list with Count Eulenburg more than once."

In Stettin and during the whole course of the manœuvres, Lord Lonsdale was treated the same as in Berlin: the Kaiser was charming to him when they met, but their meetings were few and far between, His Lordship being always lodged at some distance from his host's headquarters and depended for his company on anybody but the high-born gentleman who had been his guest at Lowther Castle. He enjoyed the benefits of the imperial livery so far as carriages and mounts went, but the privilege accorded to every guest of distinction at our Court—regular attendance by *Kammerdiener* and footmen of the royal service—was denied him. And why did the Kaiser set the laws of hospitality at defiance?

Shortly before the Englishman's arrival in the capital, William learned from Herr von Zedlitz-Trützschler, Lieutenant in the First Guards, that Lord Lonsdale, when conversation had turned upon the claims of the European nobility, had remarked that he thought himself quite as good as the King of Würtemberg. It happened during the stay of the imperial party at Lowther Castle.

"A simple English nobleman as good as the King of Würtemberg!" cried His Majesty. This insult to a monarch was a direct blow at his self-infatuation. His ego was mightily worked up. "Have the goodness to call Moltke." Zedlitz was dismissed with a wave of the hand.

These were His Majesty's instructions to the adjutant: "Inform Count Eulenburg that during the whole of his stay Lord Lonsdale must be lodged at a hotel. We have room for him neither in the Schloss, nor in the royal castle at Stettin. He is to be treated with the utmost courtesy,

of course, but the fact must not be lost sight of that he is a private gentleman, like Mr. Poultney Bigelow, for instance, nothing more. All Court and military officials must be advised of these instructions at once."

Hence the order to close up Prince Henry's quarters, the snubs at the parade and banquet, the non-admittance to the imperial tea-party and the indignity of hugger-muggering at frowsy hotels in the manœuvre territory, while the honored guest of Lowther Castle had room for the last of German princelings in his chateaux and hunting-boxes. The ego rages and devours its victims.

A certain Hamburg editor, who spoke disrespectfully of kingship, was also treated to an exhibition of the Kaiser's holy zeal for avenging affronts upon the royal dignity. Like most of his colleagues throughout Europe, the *Hansastaedter* had printed racy accounts of the King of Belgium's escapades. Thunder and Doria! the paper had scarcely reached Berlin when a suit for *lèse majesté* was brought by the public prosecutor!

"I will prove my assertions," said the journalist.

"Such evidence is inadmissible; the intention to hold royalty up to ridicule and contempt alone counts."

The newspaper man got ten months. It reminds one of Pedro Arbues's dictum: "Innocent or not, let the Jew be fried."

It has been charged that the Kaiser's hostile attitude toward Greece during her late war was primarily dictated by his desire to oblige a handful of Berlin and Frankfurt stock-jobbers; the deal, if there was one, had, of course, nothing to do with the Guelph Fund story, mentioned elsewhere in these volumes, but those in daily attendance upon their Majesties are more correctly informed. If Sophie of Prussia, now Duchess of Sparta, had not become an apostate, and incidentally if my mistress had not insisted

upon horseback exercise and wearing awfully tight corsets during her advanced pregnancy, the Empress would probably have gone her full time with the child subsequently named Joachim. As it happened, the boy was prematurely born during a fit of passion in which Her Majesty indulged upon hearing the news that her sister-in-law was about to embrace the Greek faith. Little Joachim is a weakling, given to epilepsy, and this condition the Kaiser charges to his sister's "bad conduct." *Ergo*, when her adopted country got into trouble, William never stopped to think that by hostile demonstrations he imperilled the throne upon which a Prussian Princess was to sit. His insulted self-love alone had a voice in the politics of the day, and its cry was for revenge. While Her Majesty, whose Lutheran fanaticism is easily aroused, talked of "God's chastisement about to overtake Sophie," William openly avowed that he meant to bring the Duchess of Sparta to her knees. "I will have no rebels in my family," he said. That, while engaged in the pleasant pastime of correcting an obstreperous relative, he had occasion to serve his friend, the Sultan, was an after-thought no less satisfactory to the imperial Captain Bobadil than the opportunities offered for thrusting a thorn into Czar Nicholas's side, for pulling at the heart-strings of venerable King Christian, for enraging "Uncle Bertie," and for giving his mother renewed proof of the full extent of her impotence.

This passion for browbeating, for humbling one's dependents, and for striking terror into the hearts of the weak, is one of the characteristics of Cesarean insanity. It moved Caligula to wild laughter when, looking up from table, he observed two consuls on the other side of the board.

"What may provoke Thy Divinity's mirth?"

"The thought that it requires but a movement of my thumb to have your heads take the place of the boars' on yonder platter."

The craze to "show off" is egoism on its hind legs,—a very different brand from the harmless amusement William finds in pronouncing toasts to his grandmother in the words: "I drink to the health of the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, *Chief of my First Guard Dragoons*," or even from the speech the Kaiser made in deposing Count Waldersee as Chief of the General Staff, when he insinuated that, by removing him to the province "where Her Majesty, the Empress, first saw the light," royal honors (instead of a slight) were conferred upon him.

Some of our courtiers excuse all the Kaiser does on the plea of impulsiveness, a condition which they take to be an attribute of genius. Whether his egotistical brutality breaks up a banquet, as it did August 16, 1893, when he drove to the Casino of the Guard Dragoons merely to say that, as Counts Herbert and Wilhelm Bismarck were in attendance, he, the Kaiser, preferred to eat at home, or whether he spoils a family reunion like the one planned for the wedding of *Mademoiselle* von Wedell with Count Bismarck-Bohlen (in February, 1897), when the bride's father was commanded to ask Herbert Bismarck to stay away from his cousin's nuptials as otherwise His Majesty would withdraw his presence,—whether he imperils the future politics of the *Reich* by accusing a Crown Prince to his father, or by making ill-natured remarks about another heir's bride-elect,—these complaisant clawbacks say the sovereign must neither be blamed nor criticized. "*Tel est mon plaisir*," and there is an end of it.

But woe to others assuming like privileges! There was Nicholas, for instance, now Czar of all the Russias, but merely a gay young gentleman when a visitor at our Court

on the occasion of Princess Marguerite's wedding, in January, 1893. No wonder a week of state banquets and parades, and parades and state banquets, made him long for less formal amusements. On the evening of January 27, when the Kaiser and Kaiserin and the rest of the nation's great were expecting His Imperial Highness at the palace of Count Schouvalow, then Russian Ambassador, he sent his regrets, adding that he was enjoying himself so hugely, it would be a shame to break up his party. As we sat down without the guest of honor, William's face was a study: wrath, tempered by surprise, was pictured in every line of it. He showed his annoyance, yet seemed to be incredulous of the slight offered. As Her Majesty expressed it, he thought for a time it was all a joke; that any one in his sober senses should dare to affront him, he refused to believe. However, even before Roman punch was served, everybody in the festive chambers knew that the Czarovitch was at Duke Günther's in the Palais Pourtales, whither he had gone at one o'clock, and where a motley array of rakes, French marquises, and dancing-girls used to convene. They had a great time, those two royal bachelors and their friends, and when, finally, His Imperial Highness's adjutant reminded him that it was necessary to prepare for the supper at the Embassy, Nicholas vowed that he preferred an hour with his Mignon to an eternity with all the German Emperors and Empresses that ever lived. At the concert, I heard Count Schouvalow whisper to his wife: "The Kaiser insists upon reporting this business to the Czar, with all details, the Empress Frederick's protest and my own notwithstanding. As for Duke Günther, he told Her Majesty that he will kick him out of the army."

The Duke of Schleswig, accordingly, got his walking-papers and Czar Alexander a furious letter, complaining of

his son's disregard for the decencies of life and denouncing his proclivities for vice. But twenty-one months later they carried Alexander to the Peter-Paul Cathedral a dead man, and Nicholas, the slurred and despised, mounted the throne of the Northern Empire. The period of uncertainty and anxiety respecting the Russo-German *entente*, that followed, until at last the Breslau meeting was arranged, must be still fresh in the reading public's memory.

The other incident alluded to happened at the banquet held in honor of Li Hung Chang at the Neues Palais in June, 1896. Toward the close of the repast, Gun-charger Rieger, on duty behind the Emperor's chair, handed his master a despatch. To tear open the envelope, read the message, and burst out laughing, was the work of a moment. These strange antics—they must have been strange indeed in the eyes of a Chinese—the Bismarck of the yellow jacket and the three-eyed peacock's feather viewed with wonderment, and William, observing Li's looks, ordered the interpreter to inform the Viceroy that his, the Kaiser's, merriment was caused by the news of an important engagement of marriage. Now Li wants to know everything, whether it be the bottom of a *magnum*, or a family affair. So he sent word that he would be obliged if His Majesty cared to tell him which of his friends had made a fool of himself.

In answer the Kaiser handed the interpreter the telegram. It announced the betrothal of the Prince of Naples to Princess Helene of Montenegro.

Soon afterward the dinner came to an end, and Li, still puzzling, heard the Kaiser say a few words to Count Eulenburg which made that gentleman laugh even more immoderately than the Kaiser had done. "See what the joke is, and be sure to get a satisfactory answer at last," demanded the Viceroy impatiently.

"The Kaiser"—this was the answer brought back—"told Count Eulenburg that the grandmother of Princess Helene of Montenegro had been a peddler of chestnuts."

What His Majesty really said was this: "*Der ihre Grossmutter hat noch mit Kastanien auf der Strasse vagirend gehandelt.*" (This one's grandmother was but a street vagabond, peddling chestnuts.) His Excellency himself is authority for this corrected version, which he related to Her Majesty and some of her ladies the same afternoon.

The news from Rome was an awful blow to my mistress, for up to then she had never given up hope that Victor Emmanuel would marry her sister Feo. The Kaiser's brutal joke helped her over the embarrassing situation.

"An excellent *bonmot*," she exclaimed; "it shall have a place in my diary."

If the saying had but remained between the covers of that precious volume, the key of which rests on Her Majesty's heart! But it was thought good enough to become a "winged word" among the friends of the imperial couple, and of course found its way to the Quirinal. Since then the alliance between Germany and Italy has practically ceased to exist.

As a flash of genius, too, those amiable pick-thanks praised the Kaiser's feat at Darmstadt (November, 1897), when, standing on the castle balcony with the Czar, he suddenly placed his arm about Nicholas's shoulders, thereby giving Herr Feisler, the imperial photographer-in-ordinary, on watch below, a chance for a sensational snapshot. Feisler promptly turned the negative over to a Berlin speculator, and soon the show-windows offered ocular proof "that the relations between Berlin and St. Petersburg were of the most cordial character." But when the pictures reached Muscovite dealers, ten days later, a decree of confiscation went forth; the photographs were pronounced apocryphal,

and the official telegraph and news companies received orders to "feature this piece of intelligence and give wide publicity to the fact that a fraud had been practised upon the public."

Then there was that greatest of Berlin military spectacles, the annual spring parade on the Tempelhofer Feld (June 1), which in all sorts of weather attracts Berliners by the hundred thousand, besides tens of thousands of visiting foreigners. Last year (1897) the heavens were most considerate,—a beautiful, clear sky, neither excessive heat nor annoying dust,—the masses promised themselves most elaborate pageants. Everybody was quite sure that not only the usual two, but at least three, passings by of the Guard Corps would take place. But the reverse happened. The troops had no sooner filed by their Majesties once, than the Kaiser delivered a short *critique*, and that done, trotted off the field, amid ominous silence and facing a most disrespectful populace. By the time the gala coaches with the ladies of the Court were driven along the lines, however, the sweet plebs had recovered its voice.

"If they can't attend a review together without fighting, let *her* stay at home." "Why did she not get off her horse and into her carriage?" "Next year we will all bring a box of cold-cream along." With such and similar remarks, coined for our benefit, we were bombarded as we slowly wended our way to the spot where Her Majesty's landau was halting.

"Heavens," I said, "they are talking of the Empress!"

"Is it possible?" replied Countess B——, with a little shudder. At that moment, a ragged urchin, riding on the shoulders of a stalwart son of toil, shouted into my ear: "*Hat sie sich wirklich durchgeritten?*" The impudent query was greeted with loud guffaws, and indecent offers of assistance were heard on all sides.

When, finally, we caught up with Her Majesty's suite, the reason for the abrupt ending of the parade was learned. After drawing up in line, the Kaiser had eyed his wife's uniform and accoutrement critically, and missed the special decoration given her by Queen Victoria, portraits of Victoria and Albert, surrounded by a chain of brilliants. He was furious. "How could you lose that precious jewel?" he demanded, disregarding the presence of his adjutants; "next you will drop the Regent[1] in some gutter, and I shall have to make good the loss."

"I do not know," stuttered the Empress. "Frau von Haake fastened it to my breast."

"Haake did? Well, I just long to give her a piece of my mind!" And in order to jump on that miserable maid with as little delay as possible, the puissant war-lord cut in two the proudest military review of the year, to which Princes by the score and all the Ambassadors and Ministers had been invited, while half the town had turned out in its honor! And Paul of Russia was called a madman for running a mile to cane a soldier! The ornament, by the way, was returned by an honest workman, who found it in the grass and who got less than the legal[2] fee as reward, and no recompense for his travelling expenses to Potsdam.

"One step above the sublime makes the ridiculous, and one step above the ridiculous makes the sublime again."[3]

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[1] A large diamond, the finest of the Prussian crown-jewels. The crown-jewels are only lent to the incumbent of the throne, who has to make losses good.

[2] In April, 1898, the man brought suit against the imperial treasury on that account. Case yet undecided.

[3] This *mot* from Thomas Paine's "Age of Reason" (published 1795) seems to be the original of Napoleon's remark after his return from the disastrous Russian campaign: "From the sublime to the ridiculous, there is but one step."

After chasing, Paul-fashion, from the parade to wrangle with a servant, His Majesty sat down to dedicate a number of Bibles for the new Berlin garrison church, inscribing them as follows:

"I will walk among you and will be your God and you shall be my people." "Ye shall walk in all the ways which I have commanded you." "Without me you can do nothing." He signed each sentence "Wilhelm, *Imperator, Rex*," and omitted quotation-marks, as well as book, chapter, and verse, by which to indicate the origin of the phrases.[1] "They shall stand by themselves as expressions of my royal will," he said to Her Majesty.

In September followed the "divine-appointment" speech at Coblentz, and in December Prince Heinrich's declaration of self-abasement: "I will carry forth the *evangelium* of Your Majesty's sacred person; I will preach it to those who want to hear it and also to those who don't want to hear it." If this be not progressive big-headedness, it would be idle mockery; yet no one acquainted with William and his ways will consider the alternative for a moment. On the contrary, it is a well-authenticated fact that His Majesty has taken Vespasian's death-bed jest—"*Voe, puto deus fio*" (Methinks I am becoming a god)—in bloody earnest from the beginning of his reign. I have now before me a copy of a despatch His Majesty sent to Prince Bismarck from Constantinople on November 9, 1889, all the ladies and gentlemen of the Court, not in the Kaiser's suite on that occasion, having received fac-similes of the message, to keep them posted on the imperial party's progress.

"We had an excellent voyage from Stamboul," says the imperial navigator,—"weather splendid, color-effects and

[1] The phrases are transcribed from Leviticus xxvi, 12; Deuteronomy v, 33; John xv, 5.

illuminations on land and sea surpassing anything heretofore known. Yesterday the air was so clear, I saw the peaks and the continent of Pelagomes all at once, a sight which never before greeted mortal eyes."

Here we find "Prussia's ally of Rossbach and Dennewitz"—thus His Majesty usually refers to the Almighty—engaged in shifting clouds and manipulating the heavenly lights to give William an unheard-of treat; but with all that, the Kaiser really indulged in unwonted humility by describing his optics as mortal, for in his every-day speech, as well as in public addresses, he claims to be all-seeing. Thus he warned the marines at Kiel, on November 23, 1893, to behave when visiting foreign countries, as his "eye was watching them, whether at home or abroad, by day or by night."

"More wonders," said one of the Emperor's sisters; "I suppose he will next invite Luna to sleep with him, like a certain Roman Emperor, who regarded himself as a god."

In the last week of June, 1897, my mistress received most alarming news from Heligoland. "In the course of some manœuvres," said Count Waldersee's cipher despatch, "the Kaiser narrowly escaped drowning. For God's sake, beg His Majesty to desist from going to sea in heavy weather."

As a matter of fact, there had been no naval exercises; William got a wetting while attempting to cross from the Hohenzollern to the Hamburg Liner Columbia in a raging storm. His unreasonable love for having everything his own way led him to attempt the impossible at sea, as Suetonius tells us Caligula did before him. The Cæsar, we gather from that chronicler, liked to embark during tempestuous weather, "merely to show his prowess and in order to persuade the masses that he exercised a certain influence

over the elements." The people of his household were forced to accompany him, and one of them, named Silanus, was executed for absenting himself from the dangerous outings. It looks almost as if the fear of sharing Silanus's fate (in moderated form) had something to do with Waldersee's appeal to the Empress, for "Uncle Alfred," too, swallowed a bucketful of water on the occasion when William got his fill.

The Kaiser's divine-appointment speech at Coblentz, August 31, was a fitting *résumé* of his claims as God's viceroy, repeated over and over again since that 15th of June, 1888, when, in a "general order," he pronounced the astounding notion that he was "accountable for the army's honor and success to his grandfather," who was then dead one hundred days.

That the "Hohenzollerns took their crown from God's altar," and that "they are responsible to no one but the Almighty,"—how often do we hear this story, how easy would be its denial upon proofs mouldering in royal Prussian archives! According to these proofs, six million of Thalers and ten thousand stalwart bodies of subjects—enlisted, pressed, and stolen—were paid and furnished by Frederick I to the proud Hapsburger before the curtain rose upon the Königsberg comedy, and even then it was half spoiled by the newly-made Queen taking a pinch of snuff just as the ceremonies were at their height! And the man who conducted the negotiations, bought up the Austrian, the *Reich*, the Muscovite, England, and the Pole, and did not succeed in winning over either the Holy See, France, Denmark, or Sweden, the man who actually forged the bauble for which you, oh, William, claim heavenly origin, was Kolbe, *Louis* to Countess Wartenberg, the *Kurfürst's maîtresse en titre* (but not *de facto*, for very good reasons), a publican's daughter.

The only really new thing in the Coblentz utterances is the statement that the Kaiser's *Herr Grossvater* was "born a king, God's chosen instrument," while as a matter of fact the first William's kingship depended upon his predecessor's much-doubted ability to have an heir.

Happily the couplet proved true which the King of Bavaria[1] is supposed to have addressed to his Prussian brother, and which read:

> "*Stammverwandter Hohenzoller—*
> *Sei dem Wittelsbach kein Groller;*
> *Zürne nicht ob Lola Montez,*
> *Selber habend nie gekonnt es.*"

The mad Frederick William died without issue, and the *Kartätschen Prinz* (Grapeshot Prince), as William I was styled by his loving Prussians then, mounted the throne.

As for Prince Henry's Kiel speech, the criticisms upbraiding the amiable Heinrich for what he said are as little justified as would be a wholesale condemnation of the phonograph for a false note sung into one of Mr. Edison's machines by a dime-museum tenor. I know His Royal Highness well, and this very knowledge convinces me that the expression "the *evangelium* of Your Majesty's sacred person" did not originate with him. "Sacred person," by the way, is a phrase that occurs frequently in the records of the descendants of the mad Juana of Spain, the Roman-German Emperors Charles V and Rudolph II. Indeed, an anecdote dealing with the latter says that he once admonished his physician, who was trying to locate the

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[1] These verses are in reality by Heinrich Heine, and are altogether untranslatable. The meaning is: "Brother of Hohenzollern,—never having had use for women,—do not blame the Wittelsbach on account of his Lola Montez."

imperial patient's stomach under the quilt, by the thundering words: "Stop, you are touching the holy Roman belly."

To return to Prince Henry. He has never originated anything. A careless, unlettered youth, he spent his first years of manhood as riotously as his slender allowance permitted. To save him from himself, he was married, at the age of twenty-six, to his cousin Irene, an amiable woman, of domestic habits, but without an ounce of *esprit*. "His father," the late Princess of Hohenlohe once said, "was just such a man, but fortunately he had a wife that prodded him on and forced him to acquire knowledge and assume at least a semblance of interest in literature and the fine arts."

Wedlock made of Henry a thoroughly self-satisfied person; he was master of his house, and responsible to no one for his likes and dislikes now, except, of course, such as affected the service. But being devoted to the sea, he takes restrictions of that kind as something akin to the inevitable. As to the relations between the royal brothers, they were never hearty and are frequently strained. Princess Irene and my mistress dislike each other, and the men, quite naturally, take their wives' parts. As a subordinate officer, however, His Royal Highness has always done his very utmost to please the Emperor. While in the family circle the Kaiser is generally spoken of as "big brother," "big cousin," and so forth, Heinrich never fails to designate and address him as "Lord of the Sea," or "High Admiral." He consults him about the merest details concerning his command, and professes to be thoroughly happy only when His Majesty approves of his conduct as a mariner. Twice, or oftener, I heard him say to William during his occasional visits to Berlin and Potsdam: "Do not forget about that speech of mine for the Marine Club

dinner," or, "If you cannot come" (to this or that opening, or naval exercise), "be sure to send me the speech. You can talk it over the telephone and I will have a stenographer ready at the other end to take it down, word for word." Within the knowledge of some male colleagues of mine, the Kaiser, too, was heard to say once or twice: "Now I shall have to telephone the speech Prince Henry is expected to deliver to-morrow. To be the intellectual giant of one's family has its drawbacks."

There lives not a man or woman at Court who does not intuitively feel that Prince Henry's speech of December 15 was conceived and dictated by the person addressed, from the opening words: "Exalted Emperor, Puissant King and Master, Illustrious Brother," to the closing phrase: "Our sublime, mighty, beloved Kaiser, King and Lord for all times, for ever and ever—hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!" William wrote it word for word, as he did a dozen other tirades inflicted by his brother upon festive and official gatherings, and if I feared not to ruin the careers of some men in office, I could name people of high standing who saw the manuscript.

In regarding his "mission" of chief arbiter of the world as an *evangelium*, as a revelation of the grace of God to fallen man through him, the anointed mediator, the Kaiser follows a practice established by the majority of, if not by all, victims of insane big-headedness.

When Cæsar conquered Rome, the Senate put him to dine with the gods, and the title of demi-god was inscribed on his statues. He protested against this adulation, but most of his successors, from Augustus to Heliogabalus, demanded that divine honors be paid them. The power-drunk Christian Emperors of the fourth century assumed the title of "Divinity," and even so fanatic a follower of the Prophet as Mohammed Toghlak undertook to improve

upon the Koran in his insane delirium, claiming that, according to an inspiration he had had, the laws contained therein were not severe enough. Ivan the Terrible had a perfect mania for impersonating the spiritual lord. He kept in his *entourage* some three hundred slaves in monk's dress, whose abbot he professed to be, and whose devotions he directed. After laying waste the city of Novgorod, and burning and slaying twenty-seven thousand, that is, nine-tenths of its inhabitants, he collected the survivors at a prayer-meeting, in the course of which he announced that God meant to call the archbishop of the district to account for the blood which had been shed. "The Almighty himself has told me so."

This same Ivan wrote to General Kurbski:

"You threaten me with the judgment of Christ in another world. Is the power of God not also in *this* world? That is a heresy of the Manicheans. You think that God reigns in heaven, and the devil in hell, but that men rule on earth. No, no; the Kingdom of God is everywhere,—in this life as well as in the next."

Ludwig of Bavaria never went half so far as William in the matter of claiming divine inspiration; but that he, too, imagined he held extraordinary relations to the Almighty is evident from the fact that, according to the late Queen Marie's *Hofdame*, he was wont to tell his mother that she had better cease her prayers for him, as he meant to "fight it out with *his* God himself."

Frederick William IV was a devout Christian to the end, but for that very reason, or despite it, he thought himself "God's elect," and "intrusted with the Lord's vicegerency" *in optima forma*. He considered that he was "responsible to no one but Him, who had placed him in charge of the Prussian flock." "He reigned by divine commission,"—"his crown bore the celestial trade-mark,"—

"he was imbued by the awful responsibility the Almighty had endowed him with,"—really, certain speeches of William II are but echoes of the oceans of vaporous loquacity that kept Prussia in a turmoil from 1840 to 1857.

Every once in a while the Palace is startled by information that somebody—Bebel, Liebknecht, or Richter—will rise in Parliament to denounce the Kaiser in plain and unmistakable language as a madman, or the same intention is imputed to some member of the royal or grand-ducal diets in Munich, Stuttgart, or Carlsruhe. As parliamentary speeches enjoy unlimited immunity, the Kaiser's friends and the various cabinets throughout the Fatherland are ever on the alert to prevent a scandal of that kind, for if the thought now seething in the brains of many were hurled among the masses, the government would be seriously embarrassed, the *Reich's* prestige would suffer immensely, and the catastrophe itself might be very much accelerated. It is an acknowledged fact that the discrowning of the Kaiser's mad relatives plunged the one into hopeless melancholia and exasperated the other so as to drive him to suicide, and as William's mental condition, in its present aspect, appears to be identical with the initial stages of Frederick William's and Ludwig's disease, everything is avoided that would seem like a repetition of the mistakes made in the treatment of those monarchs.

The poor Empress knows nothing of these sad suspicions and fears; to her loving eye the Kaiser's increasing eccentricities are but flashes of genius,—that genius of which he likes to talk to her. She even regards lightly—or as attributes of a kingly sportsman—those physical debilities in William and certain traits in his character which pathology includes among the symptoms of insanity of power,—his tendency to cruelty and his hankering for blood. When I speak of these *stigmata* here, it is not done in an effort to

prove the Emperor insane (such an undertaking would be presumptive on the part of a layman); I merely desire to complete the picture of William II as he is, physically and mentally, by setting down facts and recording observations which it was my privilege and misfortune to experience and witness, leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions.

Doubtless the telegrams to the Empress, following in the wake of all imperial hunting excursions, and announcing the number of game killed, are very gratifying from a sportsman's standpoint; but, considering that William's reign yielded not a single act of pardon, or of humane kindness, these records of blood appear the reverse of harmless. It is one thing to measure strength and wits and the velocity of one's own or one's horse's legs with the beasts of the forest, and another to butcher game, released from the pens, by the hundred, as the Kaiser does every fourth day in the year. The Indian Sultan Toghlak once set out with a large hunting-party for the district of Beiram; when he arrived in the territory, he told his attendants he had not come to kill beasts, but men, and "without obvious reason," says his biographer, Ibn Batuta, "he began to massacre the natives. After putting the citizens of a large town to the sword, hundreds of others were given over to the Sultan's elephants, which, throwing them in the air, caught them on knives fastened to their tusks, or trampled them under foot to the sound of trumpets and the beating of drums." That is only one historic example of many, where the hunting fever has developed into murderous frenzy.

During the last five or six years of his life, Ludwig II used to vary the monotony of his exertions for inventing new building projects by studying minute accounts of battles and other gory happenings, and afterward, his brain aflame with visions of blood, he would fall upon a flunky

or chasseur to strangle, bite, cut off his ear, or otherwise maim him. The Bavarians are still paying pensions to royal servants who lost a nose, an eye, a leg, or the use of other limbs, by their master's cruel mania.

Some time ago the Emperor was boasting that he had killed his fifty-thousandth head of game. "When I think of the number of animals in my forests," he added, "I feel like Frederick the Great at Kolin when he shouted to his squadrons: 'Dogs, would ye live forever?' I hope to double and treble my shooting record during the next ten years. If a King cannot go to war, he must be content with practising in the forest. It keeps one in fighting trim, anyhow."

I talked about the foregoing with one of the physicians who attended His Majesty's late cousin. "I did not know that the Kaiser was infatuated with the chase," said the doctor, "but might have guessed it, as the character of his speeches portends an unmistakable craving for blood. His constant references to war, his incessant admonitions to the army that it must die for him, his abominable, oft-repeated summons to the soldiers to hold themselves in readiness to slaughter their parents, brothers, and sisters with gun, sabre, or lance, are analogous to the ravings I heard from the lips of Ludwig time and again. My late patient frequently spent whole days in devising new tortures for imaginary culprits, and the signing of death-warrants (most of them fictitious) gave him rare pleasure."

How the Emperor feels about signing death-warrants, I do not know. I know only that he signs every one submitted to him, and that in all writs of execution, issued since Emperor Frederick's demise, there occurs the phrase: "His Majesty having refused to interfere, the delinquent is to die by the sword," etc. Like most selfish persons, William is hard-hearted, and never pardons anybody, save duellists

or officers punished for exceeding their authority. He approves of insane big-headedness even in others. Previous to the William the First celebration, many thousand petitions arrived in the Kaiser's mail, but His Majesty, being busy with the preparations for "*Willehalm*," refused even to see the extracts and recommendations which the Minister of Justice had prepared from the papers sent in. "I have no time for miscreants," he said to Herr von Lucanus: "let a few men suffering for defending their honor, sword or pistol in hand, be picked out and I will set them free. As for the rest, they must take their medicine." When Professor Mommsen declined the title of "Excellency," it was whispered in the Palace that His Majesty's refusal to interfere on behalf of the numerous writers and authors imprisoned for their political convictions prompted the scientist; but, as a matter of fact, Mommsen acted on the score that it would be absurd to accept honors at the hands of a crazy person.

The Munich medical man already quoted went on to say that consultation with the Emperor's physicians convinced him that William was very much like Ludwig in respect to physical ailments and their consequences. "Like the Kaiser, my old master was possessed of an abnormal fear of illness, and the very thought of bodily pains as the result of indisposition, a dental operation, for instance, unmanned him." To his nervous condition the doctor attributes Ludwig's general cowardice.

Au fond the Kaiser is a courageous man. I had occasion to verify that at the review of the Second and Third Guard Lancers on Bornstädter Feld in May, 1892, when his mount, a high-stepping stallion, excited by the presence of so many other horses, bolted twice and could scarcely be kept under rein. The Empress and Prince Henry, who had come over for the day, urged His Majesty again and again

to change horses (there is always a second in reserve); but he refused to be persuaded, and all of us passed a dreadful hour, expecting every minute to see the sovereign become a victim of his obstinacy. At the Berlin riot of 1891, he displayed a valiant spirit, but at times, when suddenly confronted by danger, his nerves become unstrung, and the Prussian eagle, *nolens volens*, flaunts the white feather.

Members of the *entourage* who accompanied His Majesty to Proeckelwitz in June, 1892, tell a saddening story to the point. It appears that His Majesty commanded his host, Count Dohna, to fetch him from the station with a double team of royal blacks, which he had admired on a previous visit. William took a seat on the box at the side of His Lordship, who was driving, and everything went well until the drag turned into the village street, where the horses shied at the patriotic chants of a peasant's chorus; and who would blame them? Seeing the capers of the *carossiers*, these harmless folks doubled their enthusiasm, and to bring matters to a climax one of them waved a flag. Now the leaders rose on their hind legs, the cross-pieces got loose and began knocking against their pasterns, and off they were at a furious rate. Dohna, with keen presence of mind, let the reins of the runaways slip and hung the more forcibly onto those of the shaft-horses, which, of course, tried to follow the others. He let them run for a while, but without entirely losing control, and as they were about to plunge into a bed of harrows, with teeth exposed, he succeeded in checking the team. A gallop of a couple of hundred yards on freshly-ploughed ground finished the blacks, and from there to the castle they went steadily.

The Kaiser put his arm around his host when the horses started off, and when the danger was past pressed Count Dohna's hand, but did not say a word. When the drag arrived at the manor-house, he had to be helped down

from his seat. The ladies, who received His Majesty at the door, say that his face was deadly pale and his lips compressed. Their greeting and congratulations he did not seem to observe, but crept to his room, assisted by his chasseur and adjutants.

When, an hour later, he appeared at dinner, he had not yet recovered his speech, and after vainly endeavoring to swallow a spoonful of soup, rose and retired, supported by Dr. Leuthold, who allowed no one to see his patient. The Kaiser missed breakfast, but attended luncheon, still looking pale and haggard. Then, for the first time, he greeted the ladies of the house and spoke a few words to his host, but when a sprightly young miss at table referred to the accident, he bade her keep silence by an imperious gesture of the hand, while a tremor seemed to run through his body. He would not hear of going to the chase, and left next day for Berlin without having fired a shot.

It is said that the Kaiser had an epileptic fit after retiring from table on the night of the accident; feeling the premonitory symptoms of *grand mal* the moment he entered the dining-room, he withdrew after making a show at doing the polite thing. As warnings, in the shape of certain peculiar sensations, up to a short while ago, always preceded his spells, it has been possible to restrict the knowledge of the Kaiser's affliction to his family circle, the highest officials, and to members of the household.

Aside from the Proeckelwitz case, which lacks confirmation, as the attending physician, quite naturally, refuses to be quoted, I know of only two incidents where news respecting the Kaiser's sufferings from that dread malady leaked out. In the midsummer of 1891, some two weeks before their Majesties went to England, the Kaiser was found in his dressing-room at the Neues Palais, lying unconscious across a fallen arm-chair, which he had knocked

THE KAISER'S YACHT METEOR
Built for Him in America

down in toppling over. The chambermaid Amelia discovered her master when, receiving no answer to repeated knockings, she had entered the room in pursuit of her duties. You may imagine the hubbub that ensued. The girl, not satisfied with alarming the men-servants, brought all the women, from Empress to scullion, to the scene by her lamentations. At first the cry went forth that His Majesty had been murdered; simultaneously the theory of suicide was advanced, and when, finally, the doctors arrived, they found two of the wardrobemen engaged in pouring cognac down the patient's throat. As old cognac of the twenty-five marks a bottle brand is always kept in the Emperor's private rooms to liven him up when he feels faint, the servants thought they were doing the correct thing and were inconsolable on hearing of the danger involved by such heroic treatment. However, as at the same time they had opened the Kaiser's locked teeth and pulled his tongue into place, they had done something to relieve the poor man.

The other attack happened at the Berlin Schloss, also in the Kaiser's own chamber and in the presence of one of his wardrobemen. The attending physical circumstances were the same, and so was, curiously enough, the explanation to the household by Court-marshal Count Eulenburg: "His Majesty has a peculiar way of throwing himself backward into an arm-chair," said His Excellency to the heads of departments, who are expected to disseminate the information received at head-quarters among the members of their staff,—"he throws himself into a chair with full force, and under the circumstances it is not to be wondered at that a *fauteuil* breaks down under him occasionally." The Emperor himself, after each stroke, talked at table of the *verfluchte*, worm-eaten chairs that were considered good enough to be placed in his chamber. The idea that any

Court-marshal should assign infirm pieces of furniture to William-the-Spendthrift is too preposterous to admit of discussion. Lately, I am told, the Kaiser's malady has taken a more aggravated form, the premonitory sensations having ceased. The *falling-sickness* comes upon him suddenly nowadays, and, as in the two instances noted, he lapses into insensibility without a moment's notice when *grand mal* takes hold of him. His Majesty is therefore at present in more imminent danger of suffering injury by the falls peculiar to the disease than ever before, and as a precautionary measure all porcelain vases with cut flowers have been removed from his rooms, the order including even the massive silver receptacles the Empress gave her husband for a birthday present. Two of them, filled with the choicest flowers, stood formerly on the Kaiser's desk, and two more on the centre-table of his dressing-room. My mistress had a good cry when *Kammerdiener* Brachwitz told her they had been locked away by order of Count Eulenburg, who was acting on the advice of the body-physician.

I can add but little to the statements concerning the Kaiser's health, made in other parts of these volumes. His ear trouble is increasing, and Her Majesty, who is as fond of fresh air as Queen Victoria, is much concerned about the foul atmosphere that gathers constantly in the Kaiser's study and dressing-room, or wherever he stays in-doors for any length of time. The belief that this local disease is a carcinomatous growth received a new impetus from the fact that the Grand Duke of Baden's sufferings have been diagnosed as cancer. His Royal Highness, it will be remembered, is the husband of a Prussian Princess, granddaughter of Queen Louise, and sister of the late Frederick III, the Kaiser's sire. Both Queen Louise and Frederick died of cancer, and the physicians hold that

the Grand Duchess Louise transmitted the curse to her husband, as that other Prussian Princess, more directly, carried insanity into the House of Wittelsbach. A great storm was raised in October, 1897, when the Czar and Czaritza, then staying in Darmstadt, refused to receive the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess on the plea that their time was all taken up. "Nicholas must *make* time for the daughter of the venerable William I," cried our papers. Their Russian Majesties were exceedingly amused by these vaporings, as a member of Prince Hohenlohe's household tells me. The Chancellor was visiting at Darmstadt at the time of the controversy.

"That the Czar *must* do a thing, despite his disinclination," said Nicholas to His Grace, "is an argument worthy of the 'nation of thinkers.' However, I value my health above the approval of united *Deutschland.* Their Royal Highnesses may charge my refusal to see them to the man who invented kissing as part of the exchange of royal salutations. I would not kiss the Grand Duke or Grand Duchess for all the gold in Siberia, ay, all Siberia's gold ready mined and coined, and, God knows, Russia needs yellow metal badly enough."

And now, to quote the master-mind who wrote of the last of the kings: "All I had to say" (of William II) "is finished,"—all, or nearly all. I must, however, not close this part without setting down a certain fact to clear the memory of a virtuous Princess, who died the death of a martyr in that awful Paris holocaust of May, 1897, just as her thirtieth year of martyrdom drew to a close. I refer to Sophie, Duchess d'Alençon, daughter of Duke Max of Bavaria, a younger sister of that Queen of Naples who, while unfurling her hapless standard on the ramparts of Gaeta, made the world forget the nameless cowardice and brutal stupidity with which her husband had reviled his

crown. She was a younger sister, too, of her called the Niobe of Queens, poor Elizabeth of Austria. How Princess Sophie died, every one knows: giving the right of way to the humblest attendants of the great charity bazaar, encouraging the terror-stricken, raising and aiding the fallen to escape.

It is said that one's whole life kaleidoscopically passes before the mind at the moment of death. As Princess Sophie was on her knees, expecting to be consumed by the flames surrounding her on all sides, how she must have suffered at the remembrance of that summer day in 1867, when her royal betrothed branded her as an outcast and kicked her marble bust down the grand staircase of Hohenschwangau as she entered the vestibule of the castle, attended by a brilliant suite. Ever since then the jilted Princess has been held up as the type of a wanton born in the purple. That "on the eve of her marriage to King Ludwig she was pregnant by a gardener's assistant," "that the father of her child—an uncouth boy—was packed off to America,"—these and more details were discussed as openly and shamelessly as might be the capers of a ballet-girl, or a salacious police-court scandal. When, a year later, one of the Orleans Princes led her to the altar, public opinion vouchsafed "he had been well paid for shutting his eyes," and finally, when King Ludwig's mind gave way, it was charged "to that wicked Princess who had first shattered his dreams of ideal love and made him hate womankind." It was all in conformity with the dictum that the King can do no wrong, and when, in the very end, that sorry Majesty changed his robes for a strait-jacket, "it was too late for the official vindication" of a woman who had suffered for a life-time in the interest of what Richelieu called *raison d'état.*

The diary of the late Queen Marie's *fille d'honneur*, from which I am quoting, tells the true story, as the Queen

gave it to her attendant with streaming eyes. "Princess Sophie," said the pious mother of the mad King, "was as innocent of the terrible charge as a newly-born babe. Far from being intimate with any man, she was one of the purest creatures that ever lived. The story of her wrong-doing was a vile hallucination engendered in Ludwig's morbid mind, and was published with unwonted brutality to shield the fact that the King refused to marry,—refused Sophie, as he would have refused an angel come from heaven, the Virgin herself," refused, it may be added, on account of his perverted sexual taste. Ludwig had become a man-loving *Eve's-son* overnight, as Gustavus Adolphus's celebrated daughter, Queen Christine, developed into a woman-worshipping *Adam's-daughter*,—"*anima mulieris in corpore virile*,"—a condition that is not very rare by any means (Tardieu, Lacassagne, Krafft-Ebing, and others mention large groups of similar cases). But inasmuch as homo-sexual passions and perversion of sexual taste characterize the degenerate and the candidate for insanity, the King's councillors concluded that it would not be politic to tell the truth about the breaking of the marriage engagement. And so the most abominable slander that can be put upon a woman was allowed to go forth and blast the life of this royal maid, who, in the interest of the House of Wittelsbach, kept silent.

And her mother kept silent, her sister the Empress, her sister the Queen, her brother the scientist—all did; cousins, brothers-in-law, aunts, and uncles, the rulers of Europe, all combined to disgrace her; all, by their guilty silence, helped to spread the report of her alleged infamy. "The King can do no wrong;" *ergo*, the King's cousin must be morally murdered that the King may follow his mad passions!

Ludwig's brother Otto, the present King of Bavaria, is afflicted with the same moral *stigmata* that led his relative

to write love-sick *billets-doux* to grenadiers and induced him to treat his troopers to wine mixed with cantharis. And both Majesties' cousin, the Kaiser, is not wholly exempt from peculiarities that have been classed as hypertrophy of the passions. William is a slave to *amour fétichiste*. Beautiful hands are the objects of his devotion.

All the women the Kaiser ever loved were noted for the delicacy, whiteness, and perfect proportions of their hands. His admiration for Madame Herbette is said to have begun and ended at her slender finger-tips. But since Her Majesty's jealousy and the anonymous letter fiends weaned him of woman's society, this fancy, at first a mere weakness, has abnormally increased.

Affecting a general disregard of woman, as has been his wont for the last two or three years, the Kaiser of late flatly refuses to notice any lady he meets in society beyond a mere recognition, unless she has fine hands. If she satisfies his idea of beauty in this one respect (she may have the nose of a Kalmuck, be chicken-breasted or hump-backed), he will draw her into conversation, compliment her, and, on going away, kiss her hand,—once if under fire of scrutinizing eyes, half a dozen times and oftener when unobserved. I have frequently been obliged to advance silly excuses when hearing His Majesty criticised for wearing many rings on his fingers. The truth is, most of those jewels are duplicates of ornaments he noticed on female hands while admiring and fondling them.

Of course, it is obligatory at Court to wear gloves, and Her Majesty, who is not blessed with an exquisitely-shaped hand, insists upon it that this *usance* be strictly observed, but at supper, after a ball, hop, or concert, the Kaiser always asks certain ladies of his household and of society to remove their gloves. "I have as little use for a gloved hand and arm as for a veiled lady in a redingote," he said once.

"A funny simile,—where does the redingote come in?" cried Princess Feo of Meiningen.

"It stands for the arm-covering, *Du Naseweis*" (you know-all).

The Kaiser, you must know, while addressing his devotions first and above all to pretty hands, is enchanted when a finely-modelled arm crowns the *chef-d'œuvre*. He is not very generous, but he can be quite munificent when selecting presents for women with fine hands and arms, even if the gifts are semi-obligatory ones. When brooches or breast-pins are distributed, His Majesty takes no interest in the ceremonies, but rings and bracelets he likes to put on himself.

One of the titled ladies of the household describes the mode of her "decoration" by the Emperor as follows: "He bade me to be at the Schloss (the Court was staying at Potsdam then), on a certain day at two o'clock in the afternoon. I had to come veiled to prevent possible recognition.

"When I entered His Majesty's private room, he was standing in the middle of the chamber. His face was not so pale as usual. 'Take off your veil and coat,' he said, and until I had complied with his command his manner expressed impatience. I wore a waist with elbow-sleeves garnished with long lace. 'This is excellent,' said the Kaiser, as I pulled off my gloves. He went to the alcove and selected from among several jewel-boxes one of formidable size. From it he took a bracelet in the form of a snake, and, drawing it out to its full length, placed it around my arm. It extended over the elbow. I thanked the Kaiser, and he kissed my arm again and again between the golden circlets, and what struck me as peculiar," concluded Her Ladyship, with an innocent giggle, "was that His Majesty held my little finger in his hand all the time."

Poor, vain creature! she thought, and she thinks to-day, that she saw the *première* of this comedy and that the imperial stage-manager shelved it after this one performance. Yet there are dozens of women and girls in Berlin and Potsdam, in Kiel and Breslau and Königsberg, hugging similar trophies of royal favor, but all are not chatterboxes.

A little while ago I was admiring a new-fashioned sleeve which had just been perfected in the Empress's millinery rooms. It belonged to an evening demi-toilet, and was slashed in half a dozen places on and under the arm. "It's very novel," I said, "but what an amount of work! These slashes are as carefully sewed as button-holes."

"Ah," smiled the simple-minded seamstress, "our papa" (meaning the Emperor) "must always have space for his kisses. If you once give him a finger, he wants the whole arm."

The Emperor never forgets a hand after he has seen it once, a circumstance which keeps Her Majesty in a turmoil of jealous rage. Sometimes, when they drive out together, William interrupts her conversation to say: "Dona, look at that woman's hand. I mean the lady who came out of So-and-So's store. It is worthy of a sculptor."

As the Kaiser watches the women pass, and those at the windows and in carriages, he finds occasion to repeat this sort of comment more than once. Really, one can quite understand the Empress's wrath.

Of late, William has taken to chiromancy, and Heron-Allen's nonsensical "Manual" fights on his desk for the place of honor with Captain Mahan's "Sea-Power." Sometimes, when he quotes the Englishman's gems of thought on "spatulate," "artistic," "philosophic," or "psychic" hands, Her Majesty fails to exhibit that breathless interest which the Kaiser thinks due to all his utterances, and then he reminds her that Louis XIV thought quite as much of

pretty hands as he does. Of course, that disarms Dona's critical judgment, for whatever *le Grand Monarque* has done is worthy of imitation in her eyes. Yet a little research would show Her Majesty that William is stretching the truth, for the Duchess of Orleans, who is his authority, expressly states that Louis's passion for hands awoke only "because God threw nuts in his way when he no longer had teeth to crack them with."

"It's almost pitiable to see the old sinner fondle the dainty fingers of Mademoiselle de N——," she wrote to the Queen of Prussia in 1704. Louis was then sixty-six years old.

I need hardly tell you that the Kaiser does not actually believe in this humbugous chirosophy; he affects the fad merely to have an excuse for examining women's hands.

Apropos of this idiosyncrasy, Court gossip has this to say: When William was fourteen, his mother took him to a London woman physician, and made him submit to a most trying examination, as she feared that, like Frederick William IV, the boy was not normally developed. For a full hour the Prince was felt over, kneaded, and sounded by Madame Æsculap, and when finally he got away from her, he said to the servant who assisted him at his toilet: "This lady has hands like an angel, the most beautifully sensitive hands in the world."